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MAHATMA

LIFE OF MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

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MAHATMA

IN EIGHT VOLUMES

Volume VIII

PUBLISHED BY
VITHALBHAI K. JHAVERI & D. G. TENDULKAR
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MAHATMA

LIFE OF MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

He is the One Luminous, Creator of All, Mahatma,
Always in the hearts of the people enshrined,
Revealed through Love, Intuition, and Thought,
Whoever knows Him, Immortal becomes.

By

D. G. TENDULKAR

Illustrations collected and arranged by

VITHALBHAI K. JHAVERI

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From The Publishers

The first volume depicted the formative period of Indian national movement and Gandhiji's leadership in the South African struggle and his emergence in the field of Indian politics. The second volume opened with the new epoch, the Gandhian era, and it ended with the passing of the resolution on complete independence at the Lahore Congress on the last day of 1929. The third volume covered some of his subsequent political and social activities: the historic march to Dandi; pleading India's case at the second Round Table Conference in London; campaign against untouchability; dynamic approach to swadeshi; his temporary retirement from the Congress in October 1934. The fourth volume depicted his ceaseless activities during 1934-8 in the field of village reconstruction. For full four years he concentrated on constructive revolution or teaching the masses the art of turning the idle hours to wealth. His great popularity and his organizational genius enabled the Congress to sweep the polls in the elections of 1937. He confined himself to constructive activities, but removed the self-imposed ban on politics by expressing his views fervently through *Harijan* for the benefit of the Congress ministers, Congressmen and the people in general. His articles on prohibition, basic education, duties and rights, the old order and the new, sanitation, medicine, self-control *v.* birth control, art and literature for the masses, became the guiding principles to all who wanted to think and act along the new philosophy of life. Intellectuals and workers from all over the world trekked to Sevagram to discuss new and old problems. The war-clouds seemed to burst when the Munich Pact was signed and Gandhiji advised the Congress to stand by non-violence in war or in peace. There were rumblings in the Indian states and he directed the states people's movement. The fifth volume depicted his re-emergence in the political field : the Rajkot struggle for securing rights to the states people, and the preparation for fight against the

gagging orders during the war period of 1938-40. The main theme of this volume is Gandhiji's supreme faith in the non-violence of the strong in the critical days of the war. The sixth volume narrated the momentous events of 1940-5 : the launching of individual civil disobedience; the failure of the Cripps mission; the Quit India campaign; imprisonment of the Congress leaders; Gandhiji's epic fast in the Aga Khan Palace; death of Mahadev and of Kasturba in the detention camp; Gandhiji's release and political deadlock. The seventh volume depicted Gandhiji's unflagging efforts, at the age of seventy-five, to lift India out of the mire of her political and cultural slavery, poverty and disease, illiteracy and communal strife. His last unsuccessful battle against the vivisection of India, his epic tour of Noakhali villages, his remonstration against the communal vengeance in Bihar form the main theme of this volume.

The eighth and last volume brings Gandhiji's epic story to a close and records the crowning years of the prince of peace who sacrificed his life to save India's proud heritage.

The appendix to this volume contains some of Gandhiji's precious letters to Jawaharlal Nehru which are published for the first time with the kind permission of Nehru. They give in a nutshell the various aspects of Gandhiji, as well as his method of moulding a close and dear colleague. How he could be tender like a flower and adamant like flint is revealed in these letters.

The bibliography is on the whole restricted to the basic books on Gandhiji in English only. There is a growing literature on Gandhiji in the Indian languages and proper justice could not be done to it. An exhaustive bibliography would require a volume by itself.

Margaret Bourke-White's photographs used in the eighth volume are reproduced by courtesy of *Life* magazine and Simon and Schuster, publishers of *Half-way to Freedom* by Margaret Bourke-White. We are also thankful to Henri Cartier-Bresson and Magnum Photos Inc. for giving us permission to reproduce some of Gandhiji's pictures.

In this arduous task of collecting material and in undertaking the publication of eight-volume biography of Gandhiji, we have had the co-operation from several friends and sympathizers, individual acknowledgements to whom are already made in the introduction to the first volume.

Gandhiji gave his graceful co-operation and thus he had made our work smoother. Jawaharlal Nehru has taken a keen interest in the

publication. R. R. Diwakar has helped us from the very beginning and has made possible its publication in the present form.

Anu Bandyopadhyaya has given her ample co-operation in seeing the proofs, preparing the glossary and index.

Sumati Morarjee has lent us her unique collection of illustrations for embellishing the biography.

We are thankful to the workers of the Times of India Press for their hearty co-operation.

Although great care is taken in the preparation of this biography, we should be thankful if the readers point out any mistakes they may come across in these volumes.

D. G. Tendulkar
Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri

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India Divided

1947

In the midst of heavy work, on June 2, 1947, Gandhi wrote the first of the series of editorials on "things of eternal values". Under "How Did I Begin It?" he said:

"Readers must have noticed that last week I started writing for the *Harijan*. How long I shall be able to continue it, I do not know. God's will be done in this, as in other things.

"What I think of it, the circumstances under which I had stopped writing for the *Harijan* have not altered. Pyarelalji is far away from me and, in my opinion, is doing very important work in Noakhali. He is taking part in what I have called the *maha yagna*. Most of the other helpers are also unable to help under the stress of circumstances or other causes. To resume writing for the *Harijan* under these adverse conditions would be ordinarily considered madness. But what appears unpractical from the ordinary standpoint is feasible under divine guidance. I believe I dance to the divine tune. If this is delusion, I treasure it.

"Who is this Divinity? I would love to discuss the question; only not today.

"The question that is foremost with us all, I discuss every evening after the prayer. This writing will come before the readers after seven days. This interval would be considered too long in connection with the pressing problem. Therefore, in these columns for the moment, I must confine myself to things of eternal value. One such is brahmacharya. The world seems to be running after the things of transitory value. It has no time for the other. And yet, when one thinks a little deeper, it becomes clear that it is the things eternal that count in the end.

"What is brahmacharya? It is the way of life which leads us to Brahma (God). It includes full control over the process of reproduction. The control must be in thought, word and deed. If the thought

is not under control, the other two have no value. There is a saying in Hindustani: 'He whose heart is pure has all the purifying waters of the Ganges in his house.' For one whose thought is under control, the other is mere child's play. The brahmachari of my conception will be healthy and he will easily live long. He will not even suffer from so much as a headache. Mental and physical work will not cause fatigue. He is ever bright, never slothful. The outward neatness will be an exact reflection of the inner. He will exhibit all the attributes of the steadfast one described in the Gita. It need cause no worry, if not one person is met with answering the description.

"Is it strange that one who is able completely to conserve and to sublimate the vital fluid which has the potentiality of creating the human beings, should exhibit all the attributes described above? Who can measure the creative strength of such sublimation, one drop of which has the potentiality of bringing into being a human life? Patanjali has described five disciplines. It is not possible to isolate any one of these and practise it. It may be posited in the case of Truth, because it really includes the other four. And for this age the five have been expanded into eleven. Acharya Vinoba Bhave has put them in the form of a Marathi verse: They are non-violence, truth, non-stealing, brahmacharya, non-possession, bread labour, the control of the palate, fearlessness, equal regard for all the religions, swadeshi and removal of untouchability.

"All these can be derived from Truth. But life is complex. It is not possible to enunciate one grand principle and to leave the rest to follow of itself. Even when we know a proposition, its corollaries have to be worked out.

"It is well to bear in mind that all the disciplines are of equal importance. If one is broken, all are. There seems to be a popular belief amongst us that breach of truth or non-violence is pardonable. Non-stealing and non-possession are rarely mentioned. We hardly recognize the necessity of observing them. But a fancied breach of brahmacharya excites wrath and worse. There must be something seriously wrong with a society in which the values are exaggerated and underestimated. Moreover, to use the word brahmacharya in a narrow sense is to detract from its value. Such detraction increases the difficulty of proper observance. When brahmacharya is isolated, even the elementary observance becomes difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, it is essential that all the disciplines should be taken as

one. This enables one to realize the full meaning and significance of brahmacharya."

With the return of the Viceroy to Delhi on June 1, the atmosphere became tense with expectation. The vivisection proposals embodied in H. M. G.'s announcement were discussed with the Congress and League leaders. But it was decided that nothing should go out until the announcement was formally made on June 3. Gandhi requested the prayer audience to check their curiosity. To them he could not tell, what had happened or what was happening. And he and the audience were men in the street. They should not concern themselves with what the Viceroy had brought. They should concern themselves with what they were to do under given circumstances.

He called upon the doctors to turn their attention to the villages of India and study the indigenous drugs and treatments. Above all, he wanted them to teach the people the right way of living.

"What shall I say of the scientists?" he continued. "Are they giving their attention to growing more food, not again through the aid of artificial manures, but through the real scientific treatment of the soil and through a wise use of the organic manure? In Noakhali I have seen the people even making wise use of the terribly destructive water hyacinth, which grows wild and blocks the very necessary water-ways. This they will remove, when they live for the country, rather than for themselves."

He asked the people to turn the searchlight inwards. They were perfectly entitled to praise or to blame the Congress or the League according to the dictates of their intelligence and conscience. That was the right of the people. They must from then onwards think in terms of panchayat raj. He had called Jawaharlal the uncrowned king of India, but the real rulers were the toiling millions.

"Jawaharlal cannot be replaced today, whilst the charge is being taken from Englishmen. He, a Harrow boy, a Cambridge graduate and a barrister, is wanted to carry on the negotiations with Englishmen. But the time is fast coming, when India will have to elect its first President of the Republic that is coming. I would gladly have presented the late Chakrayya, as such, had he lived. I would rejoice to think that we had a *mehtar* girl of stout heart, incorruptible and of crystal-like purity to be our first president. It is no vain dream. And there are such Harijan girls, if we would but set our hearts on having rustic presidents. Did I not choose little Gulnar, the daughter

of the late Maulana Mahomed Ali, as my successor? The stupid girl married Shwaib Qureshi, once a fakir, and introduced to me as the first satyagrahi, when the Ali brothers were prisoners. Stupid Gulnar is now the proud mother of bright children, but she has forfeited the right to be my successor. Our presidents of the future would not be required to know English. They would have as their counsellors wise patriots, knowing the necessary foreign languages and the art of true statesmanship. Such dreams can only be realized if we cease sanguinary fratricide and we turn our attention towards our villages."

Referring to the black-marketing, he said that a business man had said to him that it was perhaps only a few traders who indulged in it, whereas the real black market was to be seen in the corruption that existed in the Government offices. Gandhi observed that the Government itself was a trading concern. Nevertheless, it made him very sad to think that the members of the services were implicated. It did make no difference, whether they were Europeans or Indians, Hindus or Muslims. But it would be a sad outlook for the future of the country, if the services and the people encouraged bribery and corruption. What could Rajaji or Rajen Babu do, if they were not honestly helped? No elected representative of the people could rule by the sword. That was not possible in any democratic state. He, therefore, pleaded earnestly with the members of the services, whether British or Indian, to be true to the salt of India and eschew all dishonesty, wherever it existed. He appealed also to the public to realize the great responsibility that freedom was now throwing on them and to rise to their full stature by clinging to truth and non-violence. Such action would redound not only to their own credit, but would be for the good of all and also help the British to withdraw from India, leaving India enjoying an orderly government. He asked the public not to believe that the British were dishonest unless they proved themselves unworthy of their trust. He himself believed that the Viceroy was honest. Only by being strictly honest themselves, however, would they be able to steer their ship of state safely to harbour.

On the evening of June the 3rd, Lord Mountbatten followed by Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh spoke to the people on the radio. The reactions to H. M. G.'s announcement were mixed. Most of the Hindus were sad. Nehru's broadcast was most touching. They all

disliked the vivisection of India, he said, but they could not let India bleed continuously. A surgical operation was to be preferred under the circumstances.

The H.M.G.'s announcement envisaged the creation of Pakistan, if demanded by the Muslim representatives in the Muslim majority provinces. It provided for the partition of provinces, notably Bengal and the Punjab, if demanded by a majority of either party in the Legislative Assemblies of these provinces. It proposed that a referendum should be held in the district of Sylhet to decide whether it should remain part of Assam or should join up with East Bengal. It proposed that the transference of power should be antedated, and that pending the completion of the new constitution or constitutions the basis should be the dominion status, without prejudice to the future free choice of the Indian people. "Nor is there anything in this plan," the text read, "to preclude negotiations between the communities for a united India."

Speaking on the plan embodied in the H. M. G.'s announcement Gandhi stated on June 4, that he had already told them over and over again that to yield even an inch to force was wholly wrong. Congress Working Committee held that they had not yielded to the force of arms but they had to yield to the force of circumstances. The vast majority of Congressmen did not want unwilling partners. Their motto was non-violence, and, therefore, no coercion. Hence, after careful weighing of the pros and cons of the vital issues at stake, they had reluctantly agreed to the secession from the Union that was being framed of those parts which had boycotted the Constituent Assembly. He expressed sorrow at what he considered was a mistaken policy of the Muslim League. The League feared Hindu domination, they said, and desired to rule in what they were mistaken in calling their own homelands. As a matter of fact, however, India was the homeland of all who were born and bred in India. Would the Muslims live in isolation? Was not the Punjab as much the homeland of the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Christians, the Jews and the Parsis, who were of the Punjab?

He could not blame Lord Mountbatten for what had happened. It was the act of the Congress and the Muslim League. The Viceroy had openly said that he wanted a united India, but he was powerless in face of the Congress acceptance, however reluctantly, of the Muslim position.

There were the brave Sikhs whose leaders had been to see him. He had explained to them what he meant by one Sikh being equal to one lakh and of one-fourth of persons. It was the courage of one Sikh to stand firm, in spite of the opposition of one lakh and one-fourth of persons. This could only mean the bravery of the highest and of the purest kind. If they had that faith and that courage born of non-violence, they would be worthy of the proud name Khalsa. That was the lesson that he had learnt from the Granth Saheb and the Khalsa history.

He had done his best to get the people to stand by the Cabinet Mission statement of May 16th, but he had failed. But what was his duty and theirs in the face of the accepted fact? He was a servant of the Congress, because he was a servant of the country, and he could never be disloyal to them. Jawaharlal and the Viceroy had said that nothing had been imposed on anyone. The agreement that was embodied in the announcement, being a voluntary act of the parties, could be varied by them at any stage by mutual consent. He pleaded with the Muslim League, now that they had their wish fulfilled, to relieve the Viceroy of the heavy task of being the middleman between the parties. He hoped that it was a final agreement between the parties. Therefore, all violence should stop. And Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah should invite the Congress leaders for a discussion, as to the best way of dealing with the further stages. Thus, for instance, there was no reason why they should not by mutual agreement define the boundaries of partitioned Punjab and Bengal.

Gandhi's speeches had revived the hopes that the evil might still be averted and some people asked him whether he would undertake a fast unto death, in view of the decision of the Congress Working Committee accepting division of India. Had not he called Pakistan a sin in which he could never participate? Replying to this, Gandhi said on June 5th that he could not fast at the dictation of anyone. Such fasts could not be lightly undertaken. They could conceivably be wholly undesirable. The fasts could never be undertaken out of anger. Anger was a short madness. He must, therefore, undertake the fast, only when the still small voice within him called for it. He was a servant of the country and, therefore, of the Congress. Was he to fast because the Congress differed from his own views? He had to be patient. There were occasions enough for being impatient. The Congress seemed to stand for the projects of industrialism in which

he saw no deliverance for the masses from their grinding poverty. He did not believe in mill-made civilization, as he did not in mill-made cloth. He did not believe in an army for the removal of the menace to the real freedom of the country. If he was to impatiently fast, in the symptoms he had described and others he could add, then there were reasons enough to justify a fast unto death. He felt that he must be steadfast in the midst of the fire raging round him and prove his faith in the ultimate triumph of truth. He referred even to the document he had signed together with Jinnah and to which the Viceroy was really a party. He must watch what his two partners did, before he acted. He could only say that he would gladly walk or drive with them to the affected parts. The people might well ask what they were doing, while Gurgaon was burning? He requested the prayer audience and the authors of the rebuking messages to bear with the Congress, Muslim League, and with him, and watch, even critically, and see how the things were moving. He hoped that they would not fail the people. The Government belonged to the latter, as he did. There was ample time for the people to judge them and leave them, if any of them were found wanting.

There was a large section of the Hindus who heaved a sigh of relief that, at last, they were rid of the Muslims and they would be able to work out and to develop the country without any bickerings. But there were others who saw clearly that the partition was no solution to the main problem. Nearly four crores of the Muslims would still remain in the Union of India, and about two crores of the Hindus will remain in the so-called Pakistan areas. They felt helpless and angry at the Congress decision and, as such, blamed the Congress and Gandhi. A woman correspondent wrote to him that he should retire to the jungle. It was he who had spoilt Jinnah and had turned his head. He was responsible for the evil that the country was now facing. Gandhi's reply was that she was quite wrong. Love or ahimsa was the most powerful magnet in the world. It never did any harm to anyone.

Addressing the prayer gathering on June 6, just after his return from the Viceroy's House, Gandhi remarked that they might ask him what had he brought from the Viceroy. He had brought nothing, for the Viceroy had nothing to give except his services, if they were wanted. The Viceroy had said that his one object was to withdraw from India in the quickest manner possible, leaving behind peace

and order throughout India. They had decided to go in June 1948. Now they would probably withdraw by August 15, this year. Why had they decided to go? They were impressed by our non-violent struggle. India believed that the British rule was an evil. Yet she did not try to kill the British. She simply tried to non-co-operate with the evil, not with the evil-doer. Such interval, as was necessary, was due to the fact that it was a voluntary withdrawal. Some arrangement was a necessity of the case.

There were several who still suspected the British bona fides. It was not they who were dividing India. Unity of rule, they claimed, as their greatest achievement. The division of India was the result of an agreement, however reluctant, between the Congress and the Muslim League.

Brave people were not perturbed by mere suspicions. He himself believed that the Viceroy was sincere. If he proved to be a duper, he would be the sufferer, never the duped.

Now that the Qaid-e-Azam had got what he wanted, it was up to him to give the world the shape of Pakistan and to make it attractive in word and in action. Was it not up to him to invite all the non-Muslims of Pakistan? What about the Frontier Province? It was a Congress province. If it was to be of Pakistan, the Qaid-e-Azam had to convince the Pathans that they would be just as well off in Pakistan, as in the union of the provinces of India. Referendum was a dangerous method at this time. He, therefore, suggested the method of attracting the Pathan through reason and love.

What should happen was that the Union of India and Pakistan should now vie with each other in well doing. If Pakistan did better, then the whole of India would be Pakistan, in which there would be neither majority nor minority, and all would be equal. If he were the President of the Muslim League, he would put Pakistan on the screen and make it attractive by its matchless beauty. In that case, he would be the first one to admit his mistake and commend Pakistan to everybody. Will the Qaid-e-Azam do this?

Referring to the newspaper report that he had differed from the decision of the Working Committee and that the A.-I.C.C. would raise its voice against it, Gandhi said on June 7 that the A.-I.C.C. had appointed the Working Committee and they could not lightly discard its decisions. Supposing the Working Committee signed a promissory note on behalf of the A.-I.C.C., the A.-I.C.C. had to

honour it. The Working Committee might make a mistake. They could punish it by removing it. But they could not go back upon the decision already taken by it.

As for the people, he would ask them to oppose the Congress only when it tried to mislead the public deliberately. They all knew his method of resistance. After all, he had preached rebellion against the mighty sanatanist Hindu stronghold on the subject of untouchability and the result was quite good.

He might differ from the Working Committee. But having stated the fact, he would recommend their decision for acceptance. And he was of the firm opinion that they could still mend the situation to a large extent.

He had said at the Round Table Conference that the Congress was the representative not merely of the few lakhs of the members on the Congress rolls, but it represented all the millions of India in that it had their real welfare at heart. Thus who but the Congress could represent the princes and the people under them? When the paramountcy was at an end, surely the will of their people should be paramount.

Turning to the grave situation in Gurgaon, Gandhi said on June 8 that the Jats, the Ahirs and the Meos were still fighting. It was reported that they did not descend to inhuman levels and they spared women, children and old people. There was arson on a large scale. They were burning huts, which to the dwellers were as precious as palaces to the princes. Gandhi appealed to the parties to cease the hostilities, when the Congress and the Muslim League had come to an agreement. The people must respect it and cease fighting amongst themselves. Someone had suggested that he should become the arbitrator between the fighters. He could not do so. He did not know the combatants. Nor had he ever been a self-styled arbitrator. He would have no sanction behind his award. He had not in mind the sanction of the sword. He meant the sanction of public opinion. In any event, let the parties regard his appeal in the shape of an award which they should carry out.

The talk of a united sovereign Bengal had been in the press for sometime. The sponsors of the scheme told Gandhi that Bengal had a common culture and a common language. They did not want to split their province into two. They were one people and they would live and die as such. The valiant fight that the Bengalis had put forth

against Lord Curzon's scheme of partitioning Bengal was not so very long ago. He had nothing to say against this argument. Indeed, it applied equally to the whole of India. And if any single province wanted to do the right thing, he would not oppose it.

Some people had told him that the move for a united sovereign Bengal was a sinister one. The Hindus were fed up and wanted to separate West Bengal from East Bengal. The Bengal Muslim League had also rejected the unity plan, but some people were still persisting with it, and it was said to be due to the fact that he (Gandhi) was behind the move. He wanted to make it quite clear that he could never support any questionable practice. He was even informed that money was being spent like water to buy the votes in favour of a united Bengal. He appreciated unity, but not at the cost of honour and justice. He was taken to task for supporting Shri Sarat Bose. He was undoubtedly his friend and he was in correspondence with him. But he would never be guilty of supporting any cause that could not be publicly and honestly defended. That was his universal practice. He did not believe in questionable means, even to secure a worthy end.

In a written message read out on June 9, Gandhi explained the reason for his not actively opposing the Congress acceptance of the new British plan.

A correspondent wrote to him that he who had proclaimed that the vivisection of India would mean a vivisection of himself, had weakened. The writer had also invited him to lead the opposition to the proposed division. The speaker could not plead guilty to the taunt. When he made the statement, he was voicing public opinion. But when the public opinion was against him, was he to coerce it? The writer had also argued that he had often held that there was to be no compromise with untruth or evil. The assertion was correct. But the application must also be correct. He made bold to say that if only non-Muslim India was with him, he could show the way to undo the proposed partition. But he freely admitted that he had become, or was rather considered a back number. We had forgotten the lesson that we had learnt for the past thirty years. We had forgotten that untruth was to be conquered by truth and violence by non-violence, impatience by patience and heat by cold. We had begun to fear our own shadows. Many had invited him to lead the opposition. But there was nothing in common between them and him,

except the opposition. The basis of his opposition was wholly different from that of the inviters. Could love and hate combine?

Some people criticized the acceptance of dominion status during the interim period. And they went so far as to say that the drama of independence was finished once for all. The present Viceroy was more dangerous than his predecessors, who dangled before them the naked sword. He had tricked the Congress into submission by his persuasive powers. Gandhi remarked that the correspondent had paid a high, though unintended, compliment to the Viceroy and had at the same time belittled the intellectual capacity of the Congress ministers. Why could not the writer see the obvious? The country, the vocal part of it, was with them. They were no fools. They disliked dismemberment of India, as much as any other. But they were the people's representatives in power. If the writer was in power, things might not have been different. In any case, it was not dignified to swear at the Viceroy if the leaders were ill-chosen, or if the people were not true to the country. "As the king, so the people" was less true than "As the people, so the king."

If the British were to quit by August 15 next, instead of by June 1948, they had to hand over power in some way. That was the way of dominion status. Indians could discard dominion status, as soon as they were ready with their own constitution. And if they themselves weakened and wanted to continue the dominion status, there was no point in blaming the British. That would be cowardliness, said Gandhi at the prayer meeting on June 10.

Gandhi had been receiving angry protests against what he had said about the movement for a united Bengal. He had been asked to disclose the names of his informants and hold a public inquiry. If the informants were wrong, then they should be punished. If they were right, those who had accepted the bribes should be punished. Gandhi's answer was that the protests were uncalled for. If the cap did not fit any head, then there was nothing to worry about. And who was he, a private individual, to punish anybody? That was the function of the law. The only effective sanction was an enlightened public opinion, as Tolstoy used to say. The distinguished soldier and later on a pacifist held that the public opinion was a much more potent instrument than war or strife. Gandhi called this non-violence. The great Mr. Churchill had won the last war for England. He was a scholar and a fine orator. But public opinion had dethroned him.

In India, too, if public opinion was awake and strong, no one could do anything in opposition to it. Creation of effective public opinion depended on the cultivation of true courage, born of truthfulness and non-violence.

In the same connection, another correspondent rebuked Gandhi for giving credit to any statement however false, malicious, stupid and unfounded it might be, if it came from those in whom he had confidence. Gandhi replied on June 11th, that he had done a good turn to his friends and even those who might consider themselves his enemies by scotching the rumour if it was false, especially when he was himself accused of lending assistance to corrupt practices. He willingly pleaded guilty to the charge of wanting a united Bengal. He would not mind standing alone in the defence of such unity, if it could be preserved with dignity, honesty and willingness on both the sides. For him it was no political game or bargain. What he wanted was a heart unity. And although the provincial Muslim League had turned down the proposition, he made bold to say that it was possible for the Muslims of Bengal to give an assurance, accompanied by tangible action, that the Hindus had nothing to fear from the Muslim majority and there would be no partition. Unfortunately the omens appeared to be the contrary.

The division of India, affirmed Gandhi, was now a certainty, so far as man could see. He asked the people not to grieve over it. He had never believed in Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's two-nation theory and never would. Change of religion could never change nationality. He was as much of Pakistan, as of Hindustan. If they acted in like manner, Jinnah Saheb would not be able to prove his theory, in spite of the geographical division of India.

Jinnah Saheb had rebuked his followers for calling him Shahanshah-e-Pakistan and had said that in Pakistan the minorities would get a square deal. If he lived up to what he had said, things then would go right. Having got what they wanted, they were expected now to live in peace with their non-Muslim fellow countrymen. In Pakistan, they had to assure religious freedom and equal rights for all. Why should the Hindus in Sind, for instance, be unable to live there in peace and security? If a single Hindu left Sind, the Muslims should plead with him and welcome him back. To the Hindus he would say that they should shed all fear. No one could force them to change their religion or status.

To the Hindus in the Hindu majority areas he would say that they should do the right thing, irrespective of what the Muslims did. Thus only, Hindus would be able to disprove Jinnah Saheb's two-nation theory.

Gandhi had a visit from non-Muslims from stricken Rawalpindi. He inquired of them whether, now that Pakistan was almost a settled fact, there was any difference for the better in the behaviour of the Muslims round them. He was startled to be informed that the difference was undoubtedly there, but for the worse. How happy would he be if he could be told truly that the information was coloured, or that it was wholly wrong and that the fact was that the Muslims were going out of their way to fraternize with the Hindus, the Sikhs and the other non-Muslims.

Some friends from Campbellpore came and they wanted to know whether they could live with safety in Campbellpore. Gandhi told them that he had no fear of any man, much less of Pakistan, for he feared only God. Therefore, he had no hesitation in saying to them that they should have no fear about their own safety, because the area which they occupied was to be part of Pakistan. His assurance, however, could not produce much or any effect on them. For, they too were frightened like most of the other non-Muslims, who had to reside in Pakistan. In reality, therefore, it was not he but Jinnah Saheb and the other Muslim leaders of the Muslim League who had to give convincing assurances to all the frightened non-Muslims and dispel their fears.

Gandhi suggested that the Qaid-e-Azam should lay all his cards on the table, so that the world could see what he meant by Muslim majority rule, otherwise called Pakistan.

There was the talk of the referendum in the Frontier Province. He would suggest to Jinnah Saheb that he should meet the Frontier ministers and Badshah Khan, as also Khudai Khidmatgars, and tell them why they should be in Pakistan. If the terms were attractive, he would have no hesitation in advising his Frontier friends to be a part of Pakistan and thus avoid conflict between Pathan and Pathan and keep their Pathanistan intact in a federation of the majority Muslim states. Surely, it was not proper to divide the Pathans by a referendum into two parties.

It was open to the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and all the other communities even now to come together and to treat the Viceregal

document of June 3 as a scrap of paper, in so far as further steps were concerned. It did nothing but register an agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League. It was an agreement which neither party liked. The Congress spokesmen had made it clear that they could not be the willing partners in any division of India. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah did not show any enthusiasm about the agreement, inasmuch as Bengal and the Punjab were to be partitioned. In whatever direction he looked, the only way that he could see through the surrounding darkness was that all the parties should come together and evolve a concerted plan, so as to prevent further friction and further bloodshed.

On June 12, Gandhi spoke at the prayer congregation as to how should the Indian Union act:

"Does the re-adjustment of the geography of India mean two nations? I admit that the division having been once agreed upon, unity becomes somewhat difficult. But assuming that the Muslims of India look upon themselves as a nation, distinct from the rest, they cannot become so, if the non-Muslims do not respond. The Muslim majority areas may call themselves Pakistan, but the rest and the largest part of India need not call itself Hindustan. In contradistinction to Pakistan, it will mean the abode of the Hindus. Do the Hindus feel so? Have the Parsis, Christians and Jews born in India and Anglo-Indians who do not happen to have the white skin, any other home than India? I will omit the Muslims for the time being. I suppose such is the reason why Panditji refuses to call the non-Pakistan areas as Hindustan, and he loves to call them by the proud name of the Union of Indian Republics, from which some Muslim majority areas have seceded. History has shown that the possession of proud names does not make the possessors great. Men and groups are known not by what they call themselves, but by their deeds. How is this Union to behave? Already the taunt is being levelled against the Union of India that the much maligned Caste Hindus who, as I have shown in an earlier speech, are in a hopeless minority, will ostracize the millions of the Scheduled Classes and, I will add, an equal number of the Shudras and the so-called aboriginal tribes. And then what of the other insignificant minorities? The so-called Caste Hindus are on their trial now. Will they recognize and do their obvious duty and give place to the least in the Union by affording them all the facilities to rise to the highest status? And what will

they do to the Muslim minorities? Will they be regarded as aliens or will they be made to feel that they cannot be treated as aliens in their own land and that they will have all the opportunity that the tallest in the Union enjoy? Heaven forbid that the Caste Hindus so behave as to prove Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's thesis, that the Muslims and the Hindus are separate nations. Will they rise to the occasion and by their character and bravery, incorruptibility and toleration prove to the Muslims of Pakistan that in the Union there is no discrimination whatsoever on the ground of religion, or caste or colour and that the only test is merit which every industrious citizen of the Union will have ample opportunity to acquire.

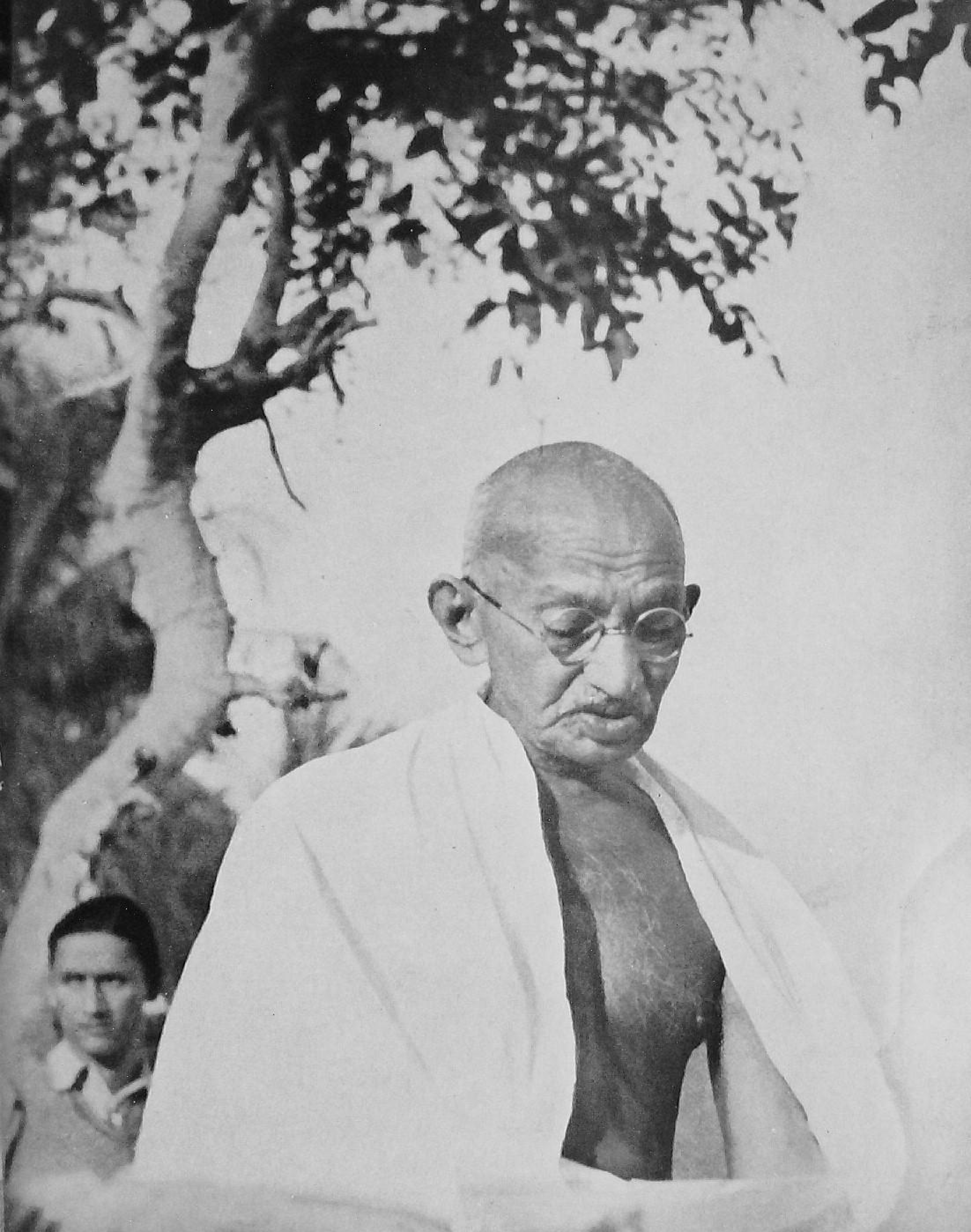
"I am told that there are people in the Union who have wrongly come to the conclusion that now there is no occasion for Hindustani, a compatible mixture of Hindi and Urdu. There are many holy shrines of Islam. Will they be honoured equally with the others? And will it be the same with the Muslim seats of learning? On the proper treatment of these and such other questions, depends the real unity of India and I say this, irrespective of what is said or done in Pakistan. 'Tit for tat' is the law of the brute or unregenerate man. Such men have had their day. The world is sick of the application of the law of the jungle. It is thirsting for the brave law of love for hate, truth for untruth, and toleration for intoleration. If this law of regenerate men is not to rule the world, it is thrice doomed."

On the 13th, Gandhi referred to the sad news he had heard that day that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Dewan of Travancore, an able administrator and a writer, had banned the State People's Congress from holding any meetings and, if the newspapers were to be believed, had stated that on the August 15th, when the British transferred power to the Indian hands, Travancore would declare itself an independent state. If any Travancoreans objected, they were at liberty to leave the state. The speaker would like to know how the Travancoreans were expected to leave the land of their birth. Evidently, Sir C. P. was quite content for Travancore to remain in India, so long as the British King was the Emperor of India, but the moment the power passed into the Indian hands, he wanted Travancore not to join the Union of India. It was an amazing position and wholly unworthy of any state. If the British were going to be party to such conduct, it would be to their lasting shame and the speaker fervently hoped that they would act on the square. And what now

applied to Travancore applied equally to Hyderabad. The Nizam's *firman*, if the newspapers again were to be believed, was absolutely wrong. Ninety per cent of the population in Hyderabad was non-Muslim. This state, as indeed all the states, belonged to their people. The rulers had the right to exist, only if they became the trustees and servants of the people. Times had changed, and if the princes did not take time by the forelock, they would cease to be. The Congress had been a true friend of the states from the very beginning. He cited the instance of Mysore in Dadabhai's time. The Congress had also served Kashmir, Baroda and other states. It had no desire to annihilate them, but the princes could not afford to disregard this great organization which represented the people in states, as it sought to represent the princes. As for himself, he had always been a friend of the princes and of all who possessed this world's goods. He wanted through his friendship to bring them close to the poor and needy, near to the bhangis, of whom he was one. He fervently appealed to them with all the emphasis at his command to come into the Constituent Assembly. He did not mind which it was. India was, alas! being now partitioned, because of the Hindu-Muslim quarrels. Let not the princes attempt to create any further separatism. He hoped that God would give the necessary wisdom not only to the princes but also to Lord Mountbatten. As Britain's last Viceroy, he must not leave this country in needless strife.

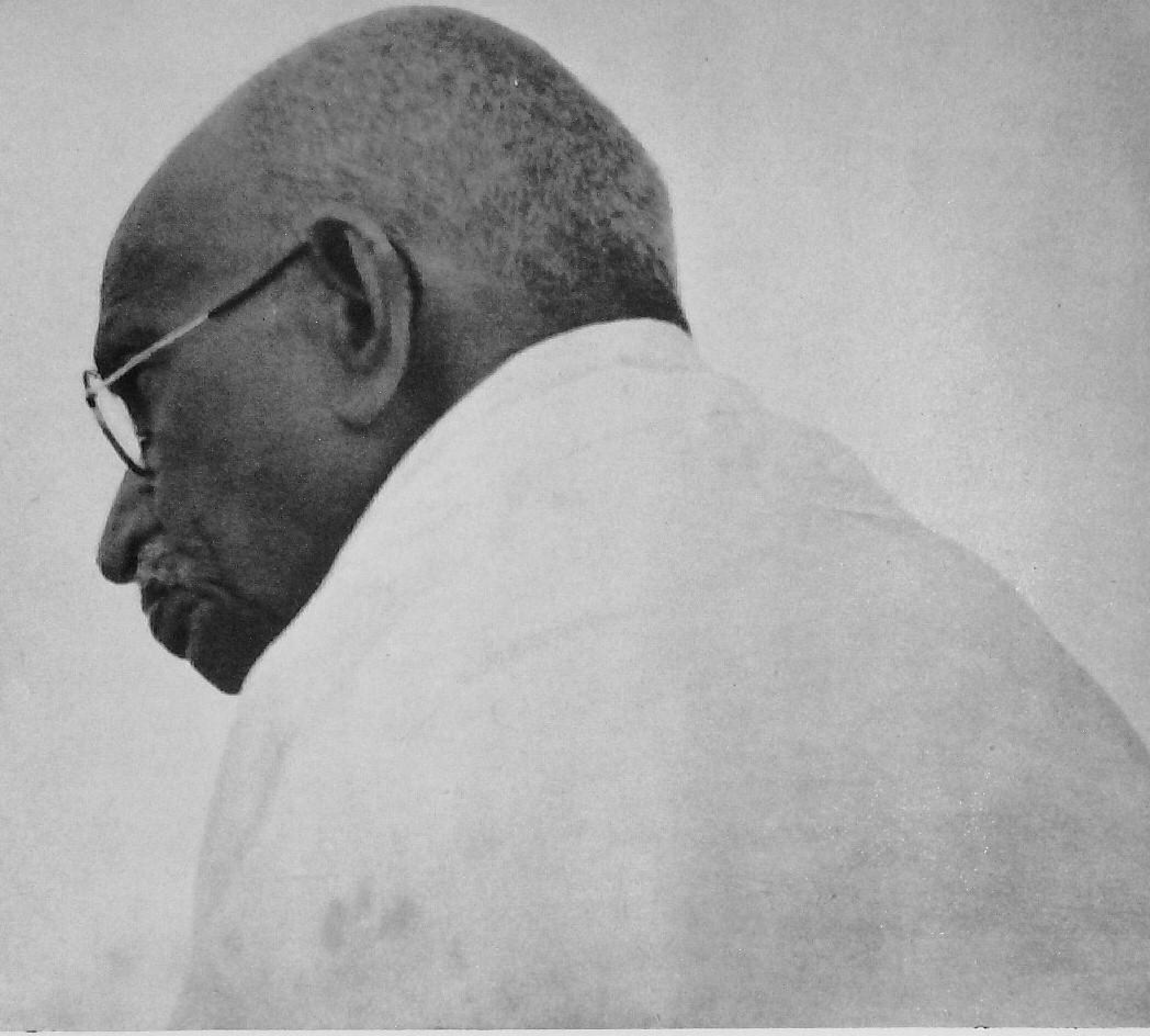
On the following day Gandhi received a telegram from Sir C. P. saying that Travancore was willing to come into the Constituent Assembly of a United India, but if there were to be two independent Indias, Travancore, which had never been conquered, would maintain an independent status, while working in the closest co-operation with the rest of India and entering into necessary agreements and treaties on matters of common concern. The dewan further stated that the majority of the people of Travancore were in favour of an independent Travancore. Referring to the telegram, Gandhi stated that he was sorry that he was no wiser on the main issue. He could not help noticing a grave omission in the wire. Was there a ban on the State People's Congress? If so, why?

If Travancore would have come in, provided there was no division or, in more precise language, no secession from the Union, then surely this state should not treat the secession as a signal for the Balkanization of India. Travancore was independent when there was



Photograph: K. Natarajan

Gandhi at a prayer meeting, 1947



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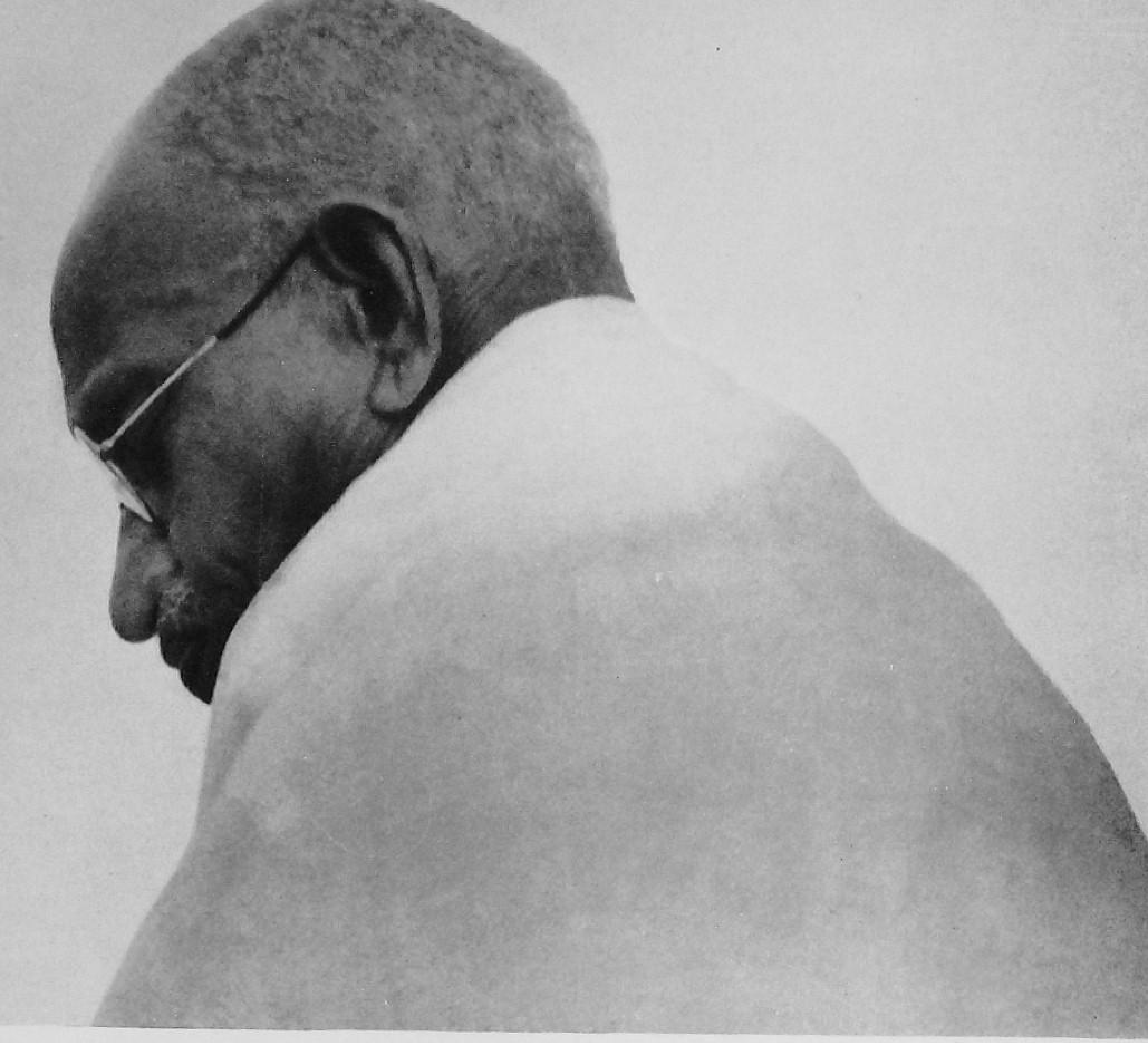

Photographs : D. G. Tendulkar

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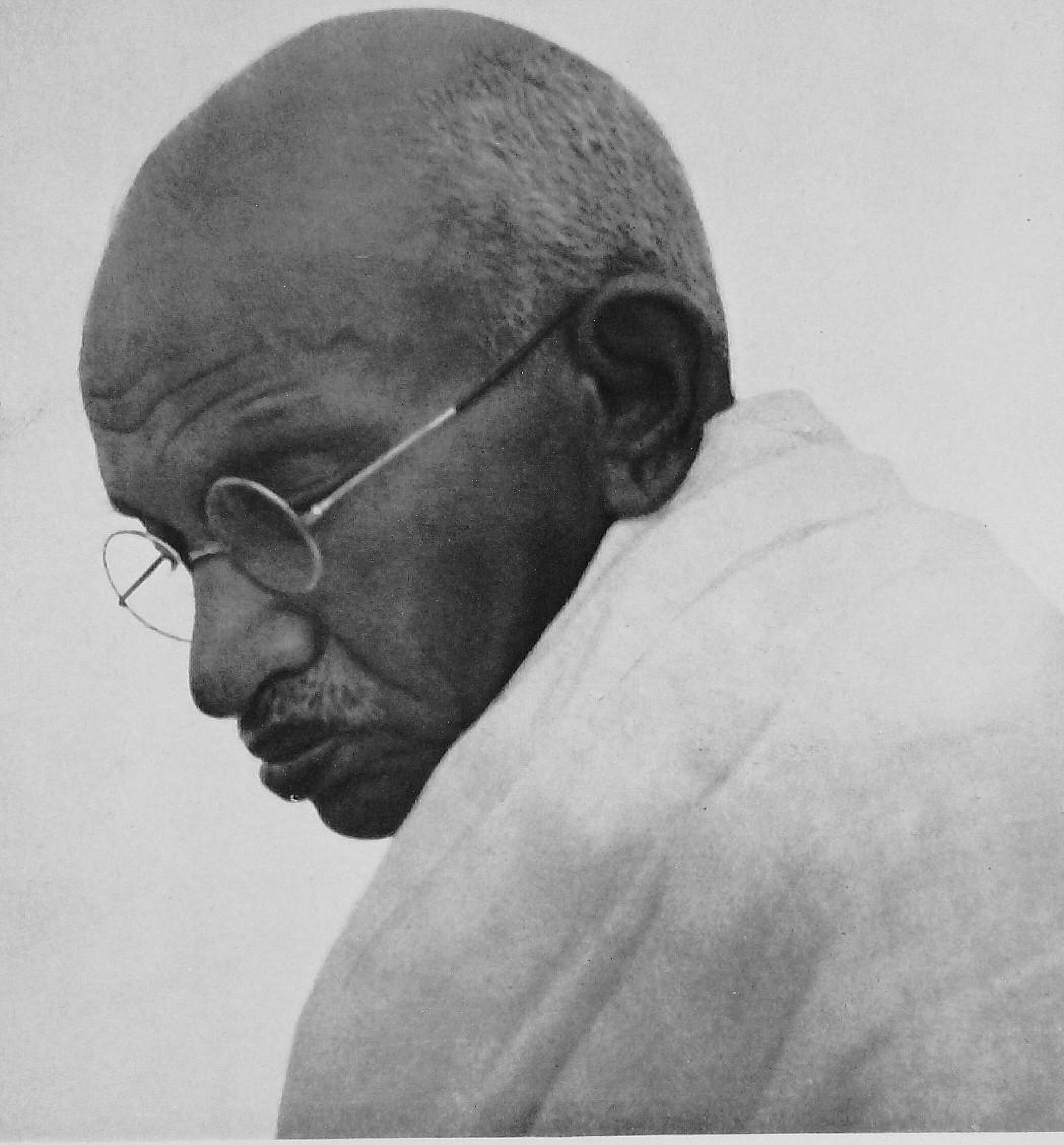

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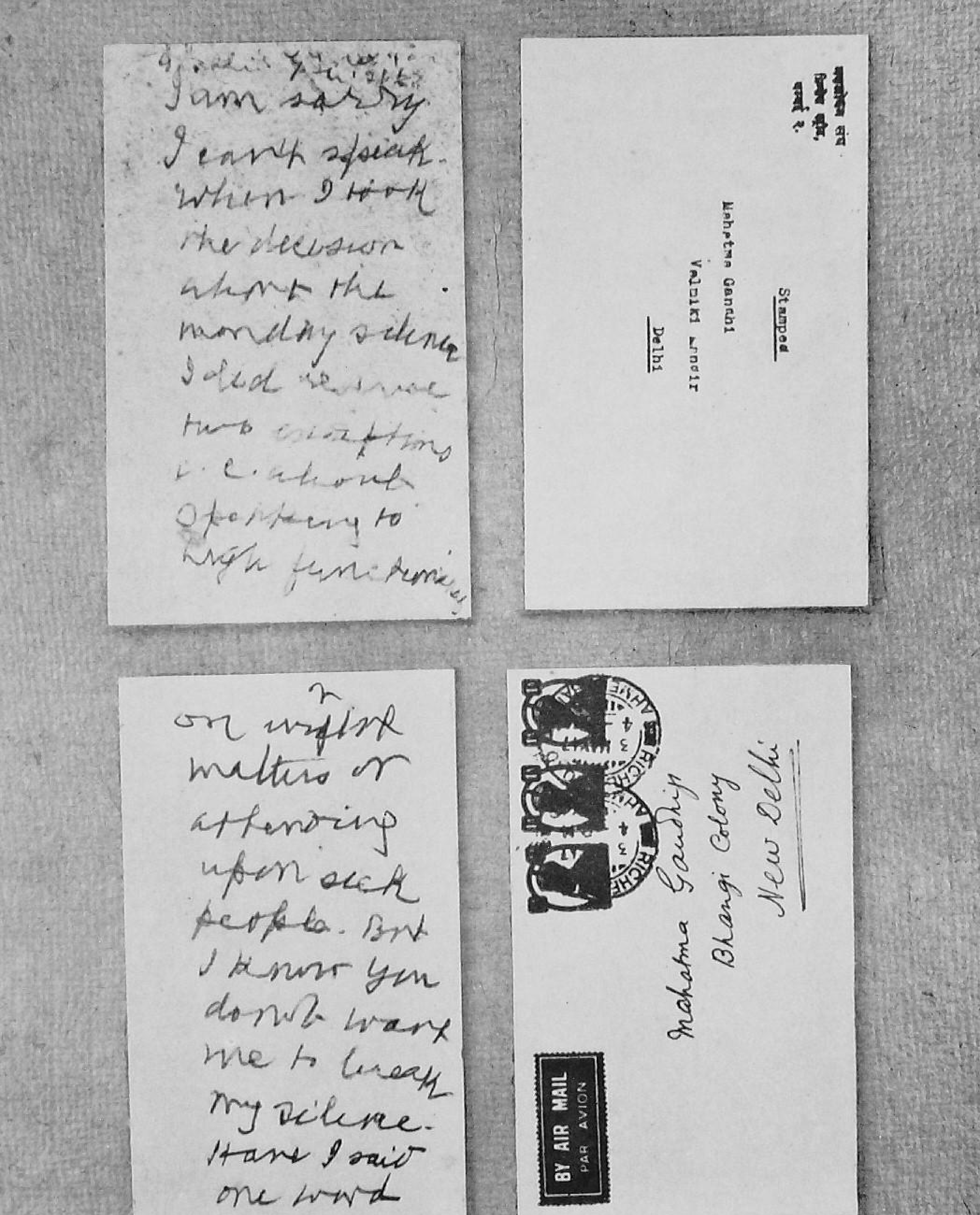
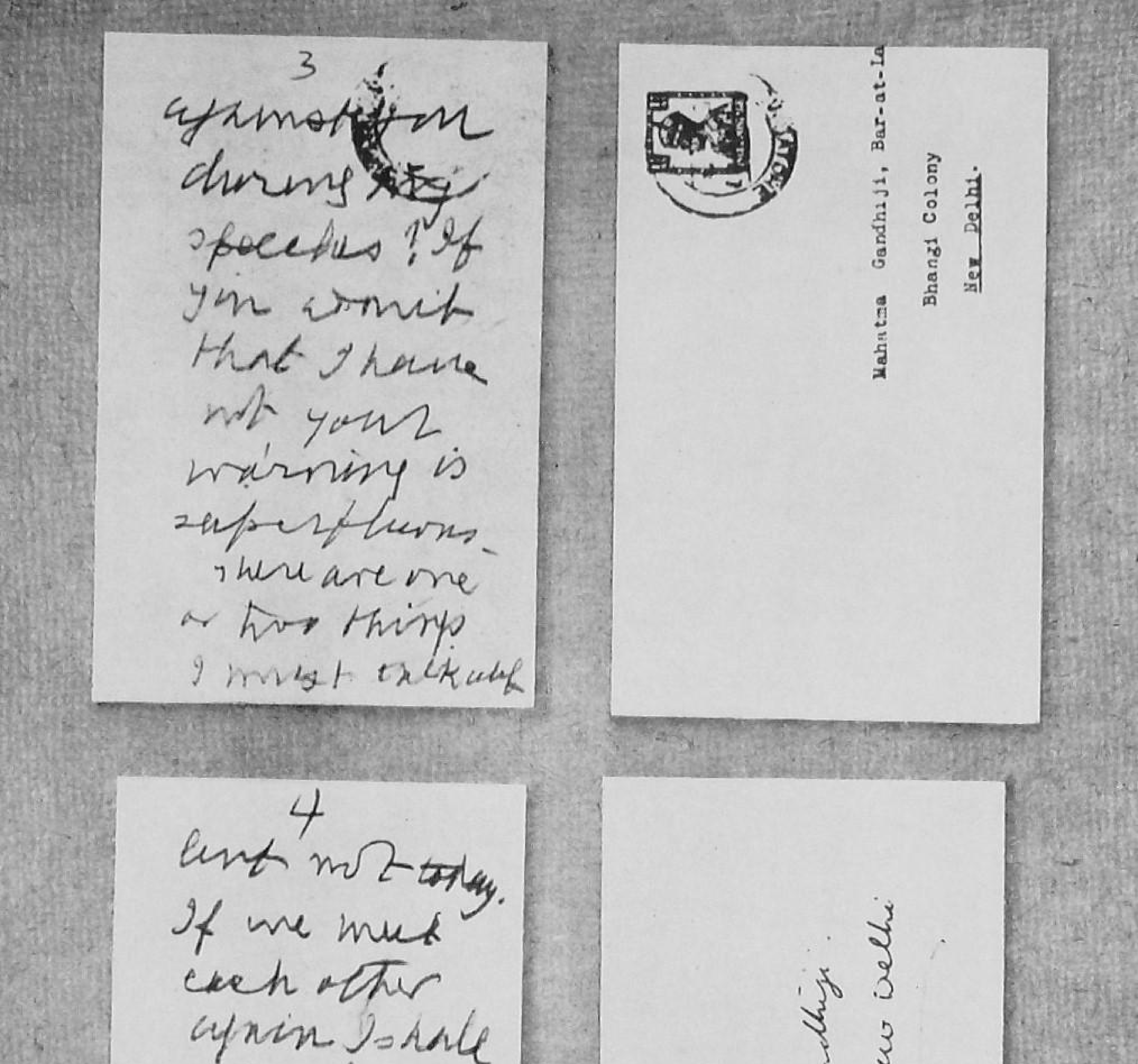
In meditation



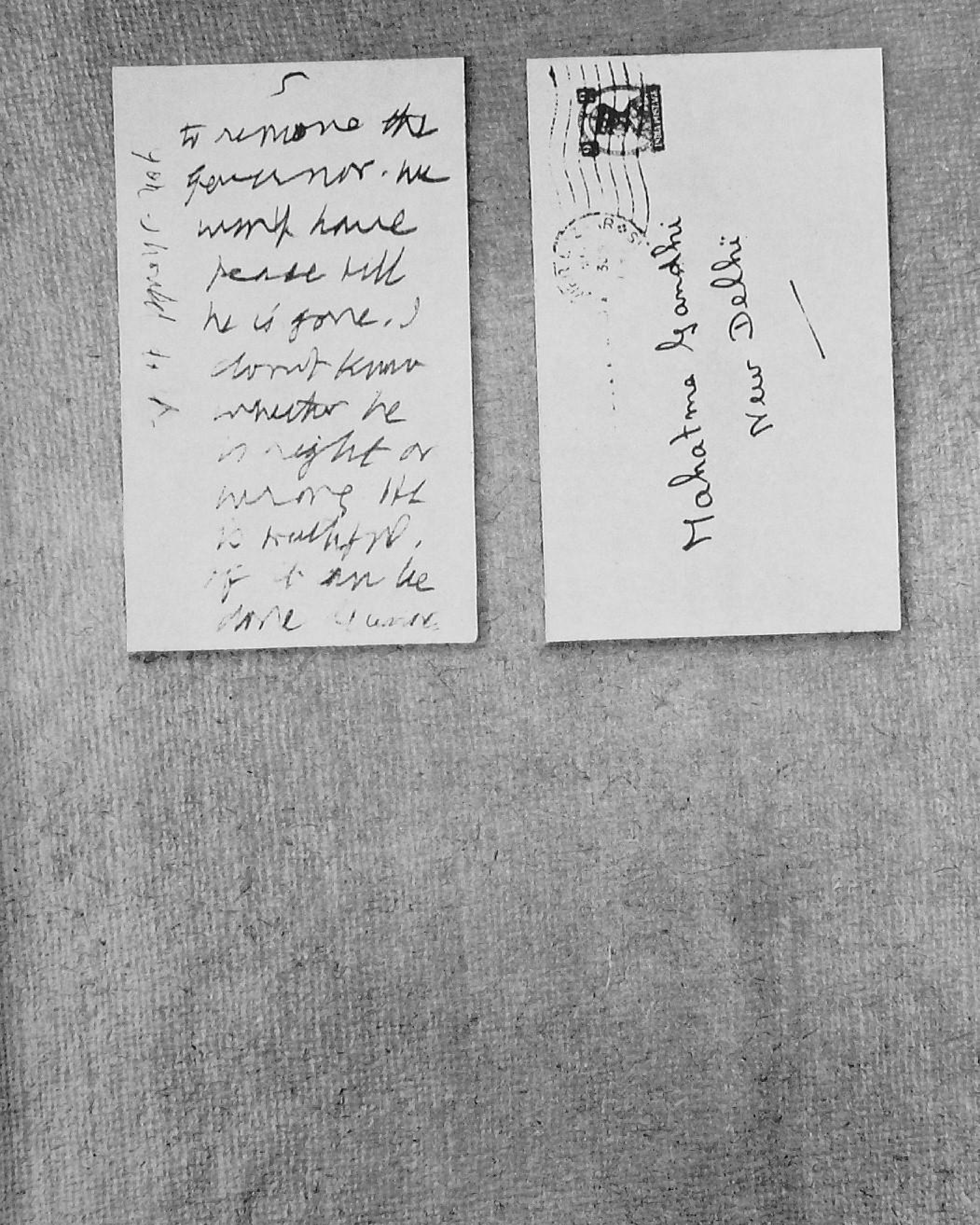
I am sorry
I can't speak.
When I took
the decision
about the
Monday silence
I did reserve
two exceptions
i.e. about
speaking to
high functionaries
2
on urgent
matters or
attending
upon sick
people. But
I know you
don't want
me to break
my silence.
Have I said
one word

Courtesy : Lady Mountbatten

Transcription of Gandhi's note, written on the backs of five used envelopes and handed to the Viceroy in the course of an interview on his day of silence, June 2, 1947



Continuation of Gandhi's note to the Viceroy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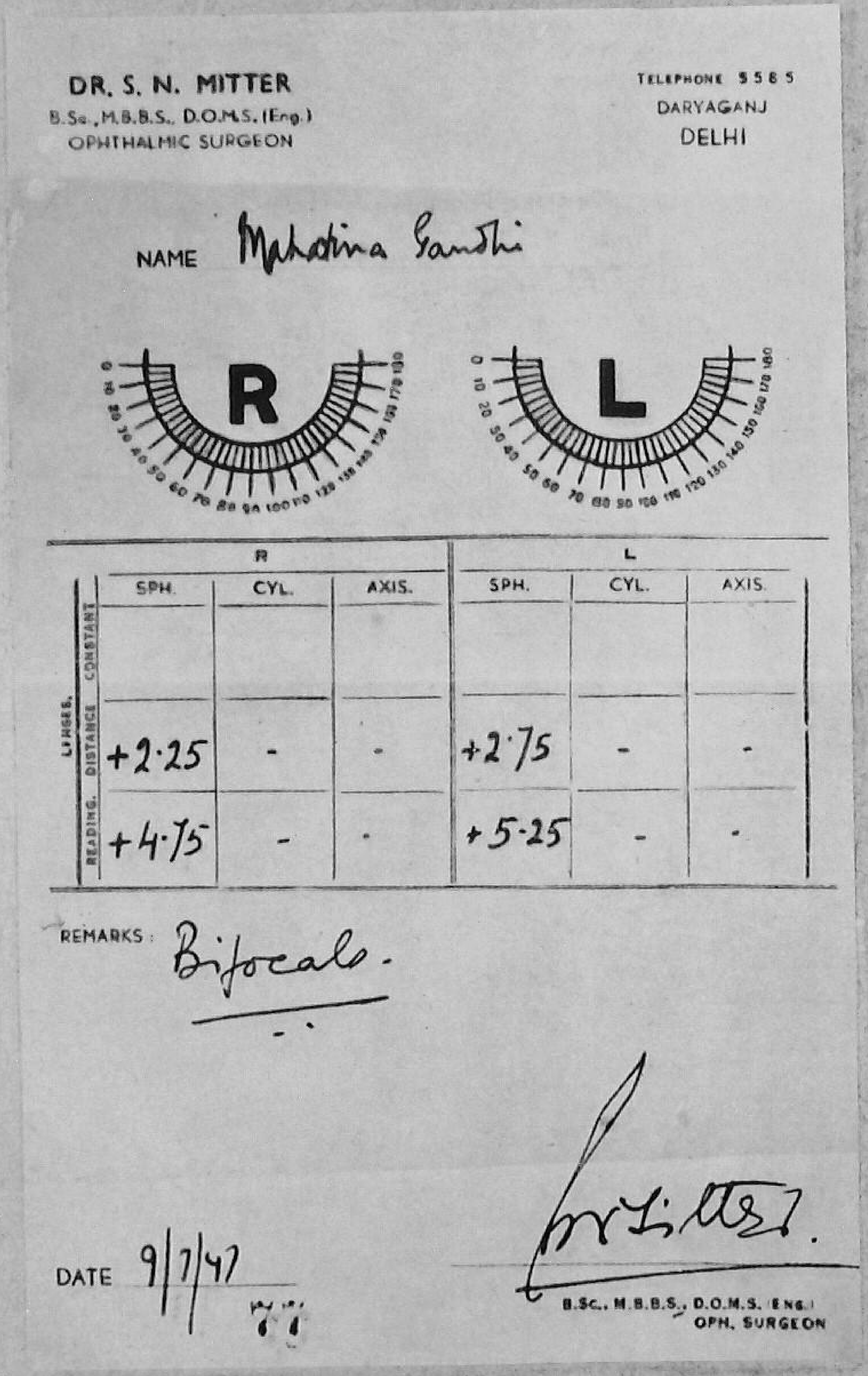
to remove the Governor. We must have peace till he is gone. I donot know whether he is right or wrong but be truthful, if it can be done [illegible]

Mahatma Gandhi
New Delhi

Conclusion of the note



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NAME Mahatma Gandhi

LENSES.	R SPH.	R CYL.	R AXIS.	L SPH.	L CYL.	L AXIS.
CONSTANT						
DISTANCE	+2·25	-	-	+2·75	-	-
READING.	+4·75	-	-	+5·25	-	-

REMARKS: Bifocals.

DATE 9/7/47

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OPH. SURGEON

Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

Ophthalmic report on Gandhi's eyesight at the age of seventy-seven

no politically unified India. Now, that there was secession on purely religious grounds, he would have expected a person like Sir C. P. to advise the Maharaja of Travancore in no way to emphasize the secession by using, wholly wrongly, the vicious example set by the All-India Muslim League.

Gandhi made bold to declare that if a referendum were taken, the Christians of Travancore, as also the Hindus, not excluding the untouchables, would then vote against Sir C. P.'s strange idea of an independent Travancore, in which he hugged the suzerainty of the British, but rejected the suzerainty of the Union of the people of India. If Sir C. P. was unfortunately unable to appreciate his appeal and his argument, he hoped the other princes would recognize the obvious wisdom of making common cause with the people of India in which, without fear of contradiction, he included the people of the states.

Speaking at the A.-I.C.C. meeting, which was being held in Delhi on the 14th and 15th, Gandhi said:

"There was a time when I told everyone to leave the states alone. At that time, we were engaged in a very grim fight against the third power. The times have changed. India is now on the threshold of independence. Hyderabad and Travancore are talking of becoming independent states. Such talk is vain. I congratulate the majority of the states who have decided to join the Constituent Assembly. If they have come whole-heartedly, they are quite safe as servants and trustees. They must march with the times.

"It is amazing that the princes, who were the virtual slaves of the British, should spurn an honourable position in the Union of India and should want to be independent. The Union of India are not inimical to the princes. But today when the reins of the Government have come into the people's hands, they have jealously to guard the welfare of the whole of India. The people of the states are with us. If the princes become independent, it can only be at the cost of the freedom of the people of the states. So far as I know India, such a thing will never be tolerated. The princes must read the writing on the wall."

An important session of the A.-I.C.C. was held to consider the June 3 plan. The resolution on the states said: "The A.-I.C.C. cannot admit the right of any state in India to declare its independence and to live in isolation from the rest of India. That would be

a denial of the course of the Indian history and of the objectives of the Indian people today. The A.-I.C.C. trusts that the rulers of the states will appreciate fully the situation as it exists today and will in full co-operation with their people enter as democratic units in the Indian Union, thereby serving the cause of their own people, as well as of India as a whole."

The main resolution on the statement of June 3rd was moved by Pandit Pant, the Chief Minister of U.P., and seconded by Maulana Azad. President Kripalani received notice of thirteen amendments to the resolution. He ruled out of order eight amendments, which he considered as direct opposition of the resolution. The rest of the amendments were allowed to be moved. Over thirty members gave notice of their intention to speak on the resolution. The debate on the resolution lasted for two days.

Many were the arguments put forth for and against the resolution. Pandit Pant recommended acceptance of the plan because, he said, it was better than the Cabinet Mission plan. On the other hand, Maulana Azad held the view that the Cabinet Mission scheme was better than the partition proposal, but he supported the resolution because a settlement must be reached at all cost to make the British quit India at the earliest. Azad compared the proposed partition with an attempt to divide a river by drawing a line on its waters. But a concession had to be made to the Muslim League's obstinacy. He was sure that there would be a reunion before long.

Mr. Purshottamdas Tandon considered the June 3 plan so harmful that he was even prepared to suffer the British rule a little longer than pay this price for achieving freedom. Dr. Choithram Gidwani characterized the resolution as a surrender to the League's violence. Mr. Jagat Narain Lal contended that the A.-I.C.C., in May 1942, had unequivocally declared its opposition to any plan of partition and could not go back on it. Sardar Patel observed that nobody liked the vivisection of India but there were some stark realities of which they should take notice. He was afraid of one thing and that was that all their toils should not go to waste or prove unfruitful. They worked for independence and they should see as large a party of this country as possible become free and strong. Here was a chance for India to attain her independence. Was she going to throw that away? They had now a great opportunity to develop over three-fourths of India. They had not much time to waste.

Addressing the A.-I.C.C. for nearly forty minutes, Gandhi commended the Working Committee resolution, accepting the June 3 plan. The A.-I.C.C., he said, had absolute freedom to accept or to reject the resolution. The rejection or the amendment of the resolution would mean lack of confidence in the president and Working Committee, and they must naturally resign. The Working Committee as their representative had accepted the plan and it was the duty of the A.-I.C.C. to stand by them.

Those who talked in terms of an immediate revolution or of an upheaval in the country would achieve it by throwing out this resolution, but Gandhi asked if they had the strength to take over the reins of the Congress and the Government. "Well, I have no strength to do it," he said.

He emphasized that he was not pleading on behalf of the Working Committee, but the A.-I.C.C. must weigh the pros and cons of the rejection of the resolution. The plan was no doubt defective but they must remember that one could only extract gold out of earth.

He said that his views on the plan were well known. The acceptance of the plan did not involve only the Congress Working Committee. There were two other parties to it, the British Government and the Muslim League. If at this stage the A.-I.C.C. rejected the Working Committee's decision, what would the world think of it? All the parties had accepted it and it would not be proper for the Congress to go back on its word. If the A.-I.C.C. felt so strongly on this point that this plan would do a lot of injury to the country, then it could reject the plan. The consequence of such a rejection would be the finding of a new set of leaders, who could constitute not only the Congress Working Committee but also take charge of the Government. If the opponents of the resolution could find such a set of leaders, the A.-I.C.C. could then reject the resolution, if it so felt. They should not forget, at the same time, that peace in the country was very essential at this juncture.

The Congress was opposed to Pakistan and he was one of those who had steadfastly opposed the division of India. Yet, he had come before the A.-I.C.C. to urge the acceptance of the resolution on India's division. Sometimes certain decisions, however unpalatable they might be, had to be taken.

The A.-I.C.C., Gandhi stressed, should not accept the resolution out of any moral compulsion but should do so from conviction and

a sense of duty. The A.-I.C.C. could reject the resolution, if they could be quite sure that such a rejection would not lead to turmoil and strike in the country. The members of the Working Committee were old and tried leaders who were responsible for all the achievements of the Congress hitherto and, in fact, they formed the backbone of the Congress and it would be most unwise, if not impossible, to remove them at the present juncture. All Congressmen should understand what their duty was at this time and to do it silently. Out of mistakes sometimes good emerged. Rama was exiled because of his father's mistake, but ultimately his exile resulted in the defeat of Ravana, the evil.

"I admit that whatever has been accepted is not good," he added. "But I am confident that good will certainly emerge out of it." The A.-I.C.C., he hoped, was capable of extracting good out of this defective plan, even as gold was extracted from earth.

Appealing for communal unity, he said that the plan put both Hinduism and Islam on trial. Would the Hindus, he asked, prove by their conduct that Jinnah Saheb was wrong? The plan has afforded them now an opportunity to disprove Jinnah Saheb's theory that the Muslims were a separate nation and were something apart from the Hindus. Even the smallest minority should feel secure and happy in India. A Harijan would not consider India to be truly democratic and free until untouchability was completely eradicated. He would urge that by accepting an imperfect plan they could all the same extract good out of it and make India a land where there was no discrimination and where there were no inequalities.

At the conclusion of debate on June 15, the amendments and the resolution were put to vote. The amendments were either withdrawn or lost. The resolution was passed, 153 voting for it and 29 against it, with some abstentions.

The following resolution was passed by the A.-I.C.C., welcoming the momentous decision of the British Government to transfer power to the Indian people:

"The Congress accepted the British Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16th, 1946, as well as the subsequent interpretation thereof dated December 6, 1946, and it has been acting in accordance with it in the Constituent Assembly, which was constituted in terms of the Cabinet Mission's plan. That assembly has been functioning for over six months and has not only declared its objectives to be the

establishment of an Independent Sovereign Republic of India and a just social and economic order, but has also made considerable progress in framing the constitution for the free Indian Union on the basis of fundamental rights, guaranteeing freedom and equality of opportunity to all Indians.

"In view, however, of the refusal of the Muslim League to accept the plan of May 16, and to participate in the Constituent Assembly, and further in view of the policy of the Congress, that 'it cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will,' the A.-I.C.C. accepts the proposals embodied in the announcement of June 3, which have laid down a procedure for ascertaining the will of the people concerned.

"The Congress has consistently upheld that the unity of India must be maintained. And ever since its inception, more than sixty years ago, the National Congress has laboured for the realization of a free and united India, and millions of our people have suffered in this great cause. Not only the labours and sacrifices of the past two generations, but the long course of India's history and tradition bear witness to this essential unity. Geography and the mountains and the seas fashioned India, as she is, and no human agency can change that shape or come in the way of her final destiny. Economic circumstances and the insistent demands of the international affairs make the unity of India still more necessary. The picture of India we have learnt to cherish will remain in our minds and our hearts. The A.-I.C.C. earnestly trusts that when the present passions have subsided, India's problems will be viewed in their proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations in India will be discredited and discarded by all.

"The proposals of June 3, 1947 are likely to lead to the secession of some parts of the country from India. However much this may be regretted, the A.-I.C.C. accepts this possibility, in the circumstances now prevailing.

"Though freedom is now at hand, the times are difficult, and the situation in India demands vigilance and a united front of all those who care for the independence of India. At this time of crisis and change, when unpatriotic and anti-social forces are trying to injure the cause of India and her people, the A.-I.C.C. appeals to and demands of every Congressman and of the people generally, to forget

petty differences and disputes and to stand by vigilant, disciplined and prepared to serve the cause of India's freedom and defend it with all their strength from all who may seek to do it injury."

Kripalani, in his concluding speech at the A.-I.C.C., said:

"I have been with Gandhiji for the last thirty years. I joined him in Champaran. I have never swayed in my loyalty to him. It is not a personal but a political loyalty. Even when I have differed from him, I have considered his political instinct to be more correct than my elaborately reasoned attitudes. Today, also, I feel that he with his supreme fearlessness is correct and my stand is defective. Why then am I not with him? It is because I feel that he has as yet found no way of tackling the problem on the mass basis. When he taught us non-violent non-co-operation, he showed us a definite method, which we had at least mechanically followed. But, today he himself is groping in the dark. He was in Noakhali. His efforts eased the situation. Now he is in Bihar. And the situation is again eased. But this does not solve in any way the flare-up in the Punjab. He says that he is solving the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity for the whole of India in Bihar. May be. But it is difficult to see how that is being done. There are no definite steps, as in non-violent non-co-operation, that leads to the desired goal.

"And then, unfortunately, for us today, though he can enunciate policies, they have in the main to be carried out by others and these others are not converted to his way of thinking.

"It is under these painful circumstances that I have accepted the division of India."

On June 15, Gandhi's written message for the prayer gathering was an answer to his critics and an emphatic reaffirmation in non-violence under all circumstances:

"I would love to attempt an answer to a question which has been addressed to me from more than one quarter of the globe. It is: How can you account for the growing violence among your own people on the part of political parties for the furtherance of political ends? Is this the result of the thirty years of non-violent practice for ending the British rule? Does your message of non-violence still hold good for the world? I have condensed the sentiments of my correspondents in my own language.

"In reply I must confess my bankruptcy, not that of non-violence. I have already said that the non-violence that was offered during

the past thirty years was that of the weak. Whether it is a good enough answer or not is for the others to judge. It must be further admitted that such non-violence can have no play in the altered circumstances. India has no experience of the non-violence of the strong. It serves no purpose for me to continue to repeat that the non-violence of the strong is the strongest force in the world. The truth requires constant and extensive demonstration. This I am now endeavouring to do to the best of my ability. What if the best of my ability is very little? May I not be living in a fool's paradise? Why should I ask the people to follow me in the fruitless search? These are pertinent questions. My answer is quite simple. I ask nobody to follow me. Everyone should follow his or her own inner voice. If he or she has no ears to listen to it, he or she should do the best he or she can. In no case, should he or she imitate others sheep-like.

"One more question has been and is being asked. If you are certain that India is going the wrong way, why do you associate with the wrongdoers? Why do you not plough your own lonely furrow and have faith that if you are right, your erstwhile friends and your followers will seek you out? I regard this as a very fair question. I must not attempt to argue against it. All I can say is that my faith is as strong as ever. It is quite possible that my technique is faulty. There are old and tried precedents to guide one in such a complexity. Only, no one should act mechanically. Hence, I can say to all my counsellors that they should have patience with me and even share my belief that there is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives, that would be their failure, never of the eternal law."

Rights and Duties

1947

GANDHI observed silence on Sunday, June 15, one day earlier, in order to be able to participate in the Congress Working Committee meeting of June 16, 1947.

Travancore delegates to the A.-I.C.C. saw Gandhi on his day of silence. They told him that there was no exaggeration in what he had said about the suppression of the State Congress in Travancore. Meetings were held, lathi charges made and thirty-five persons were arrested on the previous day. Free expression of opinion was being gagged. Gandhi said that he was convinced that the declaration of independence by the state was of no consequence in an independent India. Such a declaration was tantamount to a declaration of war against the free millions of India. Such a thing was inconceivable especially when the particular prince had no backing of the people of his state. Indeed, the audacity of such a declaration was amazing. It was possible, when the actions of the princes had the backing of the British power. "If I am not mistaken, things have changed," he said. Who was to become independent? The princes or the people? His advice to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and all other dewans was that if they were loyal to their princes, they should advise them to join the Constituent Assembly.

Mr. Purshottamdas Tandon, who visited Gandhi, said that he did believe in training in arms for the people, but this did not mean that he believed in the doctrine of tit for tat. He regarded it a vicious doctrine. Gandhi was pleased to have the emphatic repudiation and invited Mr. Tandon to state his views publicly.

Gandhi in his prayer speech on June 16 said that the A.-I.C.C. passed its resolution only yesterday, but he had received two newspaper cuttings, one from a Nagpur paper purporting to report the speech of the Premier of C. P. and the other criticizing the speech. The speech made the C. P. Premier say, "It was Mr. Jinnah's claim

that the Muslims had a separate culture and a different religion and that in Pakistan only Islamic law would prevail. It would be difficult for the non-Muslims to live in Pakistan under such conditions. Pandit Shukla had pointed out that, while there were 1,85,00,000 Hindus in the Muslim areas of British India, there were 3,00,00,000 Muslims in the Hindu areas of British India. And they have lived in these parts for generations. What would be the conditions of these, Pandit Shukla asked, and said in reply that they would be treated as aliens. They will have no citizenship rights. The grants that are being given today for their education will be withdrawn and they will have to depend on their own resources."

Pointing to Minister Dr. Hasan, who was sitting next to him, Mr. Shukla jocularly observed, "Dr. Hasan will not only have to quit the cabinet, but that he would not be allowed to live in Wardha. He will have to seek shelter elsewhere in Pakistan. Even though the religious and cultural freedom may be conceded to the Muslims living in Hindustan, they will have no representation in the legislatures or in the services. They will have to maintain their own institutions and they will be entitled to no Government grants."

If this report was fairly accurate, the speech was unfortunate, although it might have been delivered in lighter vein. Certainly, the Union provinces were not going to be caught in the trap prepared for them, observed Gandhi. They had to show by their action that the Muslim members in the provincial cabinet were just as welcome as they were before and that no matter what was done in the so-called Pakistan provinces, the Union provinces would be strictly just in their treatment of their Muslim brethren. Pakistan too should make no difference in their regard for the Muslims, as well as the other minorities. This, however, had no reference to the apples of discord which the foreign power had thrown in their midst, such as separate electorates.

A young Maharashtrian couple wrote to Gandhi intimating that their inner voice had directed them to fight against the division of India and, therefore, they wanted to go on a fast, which they would break only if Pakistan was undone. The couple wanted to fast in his camp and they asked for some place to stay. Gandhi told them that he was not staying in his own house and he could not offer them hospitality in a place where he himself was a guest. So the couple went on a fast in front of the Bhangi Colony. Addressing them in

the prayer congregation on June 17, Gandhi said that the couple did not know the science of the public fasts. So far as he knew it, the fast would be wholly unjustified and wrong. It could produce no effect on him, much less on the others. He could only dissuade the couple from this false step. He advised them to follow the course that he had suggested, namely, not to divide themselves from their Muslim brethren and sisters, but to regard themselves as one, and, if their example was followed by all the inhabitants of the Union, Pakistan would then be wholly inoperative. If the hearts of the non-Muslims were sound, physical partition could produce no ill effect. He, therefore, invited the young couple to devote their energy in the constructive channel he had indicated. He admitted that time seemed to be running against them, but that only meant that their faith was on its trial.

The couple wrote him back to say that they could not go against the dictates of their conscience and break their fast. Addressing them again on the second day, Gandhi said that all possessed a conscience but it was not fully awakened in all. Could a thief claim to be following his conscience when he committed theft, or could the maddened Hindu and Muslim mob claim to be acting according to the dictates of their conscience, when they killed each other and butchered innocent children?

He claimed to know more about the science of fasting in India than any one else, and practically all those who went on a fast did follow his advice. In his opinion, the couple were wrong in persisting with their fast and he requested them to give it up. They were young and inexperienced. Gandhi appealed to them to listen to the advice of one grown old in the knowledge and technique of fasting. He suggested that their conscience was asleep. It was no use learning the scriptures by heart parrot-like. Man could only live according to them, if he had digested what he had read. Only then would his conscience be really awakened.

The advice had the desired effect and the couple took some milk and fruits in Gandhi's camp and they gave their word to him that henceforth they would devote themselves to the constructive effort prescribed by him.

A note appeared in the newspapers that the Muslim League and the Congress members of the Partition Committee had agreed before the Viceroy that the partition would be effected in a brotherly spirit.

It was a good thing that the Viceroy had been able to achieve. But he knew that sweet words buttered no parsnips. He would dance with joy, when he would find a series of acts following the words. The world was tired of eloquent speeches and writings. Both the things were overdone. Hunger was appeased by even a dry crust of bread without butter, but never by honied promises.

On the 18th instant, Gandhi and Ghaffar Khan met Jinnah at the Viceroy's House and in accordance with arrangement at the meeting Ghaffar Khan later met Jinnah at the latter's house. Ghaffar Khan was straining every nerve to find some means of avoiding bloodshed in his province. Gandhi asked the prayer audience to pray with him for the success of Ghaffar Khan's mission. But he warned them against disappointment, if their prayers were not answered in the way they might have expected. If they were inclined to judge God that way, they were much mistaken. God answered prayer in His own way, not theirs. His ways were different from the ways of mortals. Hence, they were inscrutable. Prayer presupposed faith. No prayer went in vain. Prayer was like any other action. It bore fruit whether we saw it or not, and the fruit of heart prayer was far more potent than action so called.

Referring to the demand for an independent Frontier state called Pathanistan, Gandhi said that the movement had come to stay, for it was a solid movement. If it was an anti-Indian movement, then it was a bad and mischievous thing. If it was meant to conserve, as he thought it was, Pathan life and culture, it deserved every encouragement. Geographically it was only a bit of India, and numerically too the Pathans were very few compared to the millions of India. But their warlike qualities and their position on the map of India gave them an importance all their own. The Frontier has been a Congress province. It was so, when the Congress was in the wilderness. And it was now too, when it was in power. It was also represented on the Constituent Assembly. But now, it was face to face with a delicate position. There was the referendum immediately to be held. Both the Congress and the Muslim League were committed to it. It was not open to any one party to vary the terms. The issue was to be Pakistan or Hindustan. It had a sinister meaning in the context of what had happened in front of them. Were the Pathans to be with the Hindus or with the Muslims? The Congress was not a Hindu organization. It never was and, he hoped, never would be. But how

could the Pathan mind grasp the difference in the midst of this confusion becoming worse confounded from day to day. He, therefore would advise the Congress to make its position clear and would ask the Muslim League to do likewise. Let both honour the Pathan sentiment and let the Pathans have their own constitution for internal affairs and administration. It would promote the Pathan solidarity, avoid internal conflict, and retain Pushtu culture and the Pushtu language. If they could do that, they would be better able unitedly to federate with Pakistan or the Union of India. And this he would advise, whether there was or was not a referendum. Any premature referendum would be a leap in the dark.

Several refugees from the Frontier Province and some from the Punjab had interviewed Gandhi and told him their tale of woe. Consequently he motored with Nehru to Hardwar on June 21. Speaking to a deputation of sixteen representatives of the refugees, Gandhi remarked that it was useless and depressing to recount the story of the horrors they had gone through. "But every affliction has its own rich lesson to teach, if we would but learn it. I hear many of those who were well-to-do in the past are idling away their time in playing cards and even gambling. Some are reported to be buying property or resorting to other methods of making money. I call it criminal behaviour. If I was given the rare opportunity of making common cause with poor refugees, I would share with them my talents and such riches as I had brought with me. All of you should make a cooperative effort, so that wherever you go ultimately you lead a better and corporate life, as a result of the life lived in Hardwar."

It was not possible for Gandhi to speak to the 32,000 refugees at Hardwar owing to the lack of loud speaker arrangements. He, therefore, took the opportunity of the Delhi meeting the following day and reiterated his advice given to the deputation at Hardwar.

June 23 being his day of silence, the following message was read out after the prayer:

"This division of India, with a subdivision of the provinces, puts us on our mettle. The newspapers today talk of a grand ceremonial to take place in London over the division of India into 'two nations' which were only the other day one nation. What is there to gloss over in the tragedy? We have hugged the belief that though we part, we do so as friends and as brothers, belonging to one family. Now if the newspaper report is correct, the British will make of us, two

nations, and that with a flourish of the trumpets. Is that to be the parting shot? I hope not.

"If the major partner is true to his salt, the foreshadowed wisdom can be confounded, not in the shape of avoiding the partition, however distasteful it might be, but by right behaviour on the part of the major partner by always acting as one nation, by refusing to treat the Muslim minorities as aliens in their own home.

"This means a revolutionary reform in the religion of the major partner. Let us not shut our eyes to the plain fact. The untouchables, or the Scheduled Classes, are the target, because they are the weakest point of Hinduism. One reads reports of the Muslim League speakers holding forth that the Scheduled Classes in Pakistan can have separate electorate. Is that to be a call for joining the Islam of the Pakistan type? I do not wish to recall the tales of the forcible conversions. But having heard so much from their own mouths, I shudder to contemplate the worst. What is the answer to this fear or threat? It is undoubtedly that there should be no untouchability whatsoever in Hinduism, no Scheduled Classes, therefore, in India, no caste divisions whatsoever in the eye of the law. Hindus are all one, no high or low. All the neglected classes, such as the Scheduled Classes and the so-called aboriginal classes, should receive special treatment in the matter of education, housing, etc. On the electoral roll, they will be one. This must never mean a worse state than the present one, but better in every way. Will Hinduism come up to the high level, or will it court extinction by hugging infamous superstitions and aping bad manners?"

Of late, a number of letters in Gandhi's post were full of abuse. Addressing the prayer meeting on June 24, Gandhi referred to the several interviewers and the correspondents who wrote harsh letters. They accused him of partiality towards the Muslims. He could not plead guilty to the charge. The latest charge was that he was partial to the Muslims when he said that, irrespective of what they did in Pakistan, the majority community had to be honourable and just towards the Muslims in the Hindu-majority provinces and was never to regard them as aliens.

Gandhi could see no partiality in the statement by which he still stood. His advice must be rejected, he observed, if it did not appeal to their hearts or to their sense of right and wrong. Every person, as every institution and above all, every religion, was to be judged not by

the amount of atrocities or the wrong committed but by the right conduct. And who could dare say that what he had suggested was less than right?

That the Hindus of larger Hindustan could not or would not do the right was another proposition. So much the worse for those who did not do the right, no matter whether they were the Hindus or Muslims or any other. The law was no respecter of persons. Only for the occasion, his remarks were addressed to the Hindus. For, it was the Hindus, who by their action, were to prove or to disprove the two-nation theory.

What was now happening in Lahore, Amritsar and Gurgaon was a matter of shame and sorrow. He was told, with what truth he did not know, that the parties were fairly matched and they were bent on fighting it out. What the 'if' was, he did not know. Was the suicidal strife to continue, Pakistan or no Pakistan? Why could not the combatants honestly come together and decide to stop arson and murder? Must they look to the members of the ruling race to suppress the riots? The end of the alien rule was imminent. Would to God that the people stopped the savagery and showed mankind the better and the brave way.

In conclusion, Gandhi exposed the fallacious argument put forth by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. Sir C. P. had stated that he could not understand why, if both Gandhi and the Congress were willing to agree to an independent Pathan state, they had any objection to an independent Travancore.

Sir C. P.'s analogy did not hold water, observed Gandhi. Pathanistan was asked for by Badshah Khan, simply because he did not want to divide Pathan from Pathan on the communal issue. The Pathans wanted to frame their own constitution and then when the full face of Pakistan and the Indian Union was exposed to view, the Pathans would decide which state to join. They did neither want to be a third state, nor did they want to be the slaves of one or the other. They wanted to have the fullest autonomy in their province, just as any of the other provinces had, owing their allegiance to the Centre, but allowing no interference in their internal affairs. If Badshah Khan meant anything different, he would have no hesitation in breaking with him, a friend though he was.

What Sir C. P. wanted, however, was a state independent of any of the two. If Sir C. P. was allowed and if his example was followed

by the others, India would be split up into several states—a disaster too dreadful to contemplate. All these petty states would need an emperor and the emperor who was leaving might even return with redoubled force.

The analogy between Travancore and the Frontier Province was again misleading, in that, whereas Sir C. P. spoke for the Maharaja, the Frontier Pathans spoke as a *jirga*. The one was unadulterated autocracy and the other was full democracy.

In Gandhi's conception of India, the prince and the peasant were equal, and the former could exist only as a bona fide trustee of his people. He, therefore, advised Sir C. P. to retrace himself from the grave error into which he was betrayed.

A correspondent had asked Gandhi as to how, having depended on the British troops for over a century, India could all of a sudden do without them. Gandhi's reply at the prayer meeting on June 25 was: "Another way of putting the same question would be, 'Are you not unfit for swaraj?' "

He answered the question many years ago. Today, he would give the same reply. He had not the shadow of a doubt that India would, when the British troops were wholly withdrawn, feel that a great load had been lifted off her back. No doubt, people would feel a little awkward for a day in this time of internal strife and mutual distrust, not always ill-based. But then they would feel even as a man feels, when he is removed from a stuffy room. And this he said not merely from the standpoint of non-violence, but even from that of violence. They had to get out of helpless dependence and learn even to fight to the finish among themselves. And it was a terrible lesson to go through. But it was any day better than the present helplessness. He was quite certain that the present Hindu-Muslim enmity was a base manufacture which was destined to die of inanition. The pity undoubtedly was that the disease had invaded the intelligentsia. It did not become respectable on that account. It made the intelligentsia disrespectable. Some of them would live to see the dawn of sanity, when they would laugh at their own folly. He only hoped that the British would, up to the last moment, resist the temptation to stay in India for the sake of giving her peace. He wished he could convince them that they never gave India the blessings of peace. It was, as Lord Halifax, when he was the Viceroy as Lord Irwin, had said on a memorable occasion, "the peace of the grave".

Another question was: "Does not your non-violence stink in your nostrils?" In reply, Gandhi made bold to declare that the fragrance of non-violence to him was never sweeter than when it was today amidst the stink of violence of the most cowardly type that was being displayed in the cities of India, such as, Lahore, Amritsar and other places. He was sorry to say that he was ashamed of his own countrymen, be they Hindu or Muslim. Neither became his enemy because either chose to call himself so. He was aware that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had rendered a disservice to Islam by calling Hindus, or better still the Caste Hindus, "our enemies". He would plead with the so-called Caste Hindus not to wear the cap but, unselfishly and bravely, prove themselves the friends of every Indian, because they loved India. There was grave danger of insanity proving effective. Pakistan was there. Why would Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah not be happy now that he had got it? Or had the poison gone much too deep to be brought under control? Was it a variety of, and that worse than, the atom bomb? Let those who had eyes, see the thing and avoid it well before India was caught in the poisonous coil.

A correspondent asked whether Gandhi contemplated any kind of friendship or relation with England, when India ceased to be a dominion after it had its own constitution.

Gandhi said in reply on June 27 that he contemplated the closest friendship with England. And he was, therefore, most anxious that during this pregnant period the Viceroy and his English advisers and the Englishmen in India did nothing that was not strictly right. Most correct dealings with India as a whole would leave no bitter memory behind.

"I want to deal with one great evil that is afflicting the society today," observed Gandhi on June 28:

"The capitalist and the zamindar talk of their rights, the labourer on the other hand of his, the prince of his divine right to rule, the ryot of his to resist it. If all simply insist on the rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos.

"If instead of insisting on the rights, everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. There is no such thing as the divine right of kings to rule and the humble duty of the ryots to pay respectful obedience to their masters. Whilst it is true that these hereditary inequalities must go, as being injurious to the well-being of the society, the unabashed assertion of

rights of the hitherto downtrodden millions is equally injurious, if not more so to the same well-being. The latter behaviour probably is calculated to injure the millions rather than the few claimants of the divine right or the other rights. They could but die a brave or cowardly death, but those few dead would not bring in the orderly life of blissful contentment. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the correlation of the rights and duties. I venture to suggest that the rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed, are not worth having. They will be usurpations, sooner discarded the better. A wretched parent who claims obedience from his children, without first doing his own duty by them, excites nothing but contempt. It is distortion of the religious precept for a dissolute husband to expect compliance in every respect from his dutiful wife. But the children who flout their parents, who are ever ready to do their duty towards them, would be considered ungrateful and would harm themselves more than their parents. The same can be said about husband and wife. If you apply this simple and universal rule to the employers and the labourers, the landlords and the tenants, the princes and their subjects or the Hindus and the Muslims, you will find that the happiest relations can be established in all the walks of life, without creating any disturbance in and dislocation of life and business, which you see in India, as in the other parts of the world. What I call the law of satyagraha is to be deduced from an appreciation of the duties and the rights flowing therefrom."

Taking the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims for his illustration, Gandhi, resuming his remarks on the rights and duties, said on June 29:

"What is the duty of the Hindu towards his Muslim neighbour? His duty is to befriend him as man, to share his joys and sorrows and to help him in distress. He will then have the right to expect similar treatment from his Muslim neighbour and he will probably get the expected response. Supposing the Hindus are in a majority in a village with a sprinkling of Muslims in their midst, the duty of the majority towards their Muslim neighbours is increased manifold, so much so, that the few Muslims will not feel that their religion makes any difference in the behaviour of the Hindus towards them. The Hindus will then earn the right, not before, that the Muslims will be natural friends with them and, in times of danger, both the communities will act as one man. But suppose that the few Muslims

do not reciprocate the correct behaviour of the many Hindus and show fight in every action, it will be a sign of unmanliness. What is then the duty of the many Hindus? Certainly not to overpower the Muslims by the brute strength of the many. That will be the usurpation of an unearned right. Their duty will be to check their unmanly behaviour, as they would that of their blood brothers. It is unnecessary for me to dilate further upon the illustration. I will close it by saying that the application will be exactly the same, if the position is reversed. From what I have said, it is easy enough to extend the application with profit to the whole of the present state which has become baffling, because people do not apply in practice the doctrine of deriving every right from a prior duty well performed.

"The same rule applies to the princes and the ryots. The former's duty is to act as the true servants of the people. They will rule not by right granted by some outside authority, never by the right of the sword. They will rule by right of service, of greater wisdom. They will then have the right to collect the taxes voluntarily paid and expect certain services equally voluntarily rendered, not for themselves, but for the sake of the people under their care. If the princes fail to perform this simple and primary duty, the ryots not only owe no return duty, but the duty devolves on them of resisting the princely usurpation. It may be otherwise said that the ryots earn the right of resisting the usurpation or misrule. But the resistance will become a crime against man in terms of duty, if it takes the form of murder, rapine and plunder. Force that the performance of duty naturally generates is the non-violent and the invincible force that satyagraha brings into being."

The question of the referendum in the Frontier Province now loomed large in the public eye. Badshah Khan and his co-workers did not like being asked to choose between Hindustan or Pakistan, bearing respectively the unjust meaning: "Hindus or Muslims." How is Badshah Khan to get over this difficulty? asked Gandhi at the prayer meeting on June 30. The Congress had pledged its word that there should be a referendum in consultation with Dr. Khan Sahib but under the direct supervision of the Viceroy. And so it was going to take place at the appointed time. The Khudai Khidmatgars would not exercise their votes, thus providing a walk-over for the Muslim League, and at the same time doing no violence to their conscience. Was there in this procedure any breach of the terms of

the referendum? The Khudai Khidmatgars who bravely fought the British were not the men to shirk the defeat at the polls, he said. It was an everyday occurrence for parties to go to the polls, in spite, sometimes, of the chance of certain defeat. Defeat was no less certain for a boycotting party.

"The charge of the new cry of Pathanistan is being flung in the Badshah's face," said Gandhi. "Even before the Congress ministry came into being, so far as I know, Badshah Khan had on the brain Pathan independence in the internal affairs. He does not want to create an additional state. If he can frame his own local constitution, he will gladly make his choice of the one state or the other. It is difficult for me to understand the objection to this yearning after the Pathan autonomy, unless the object is to humiliate the Pathans and to tame them into subjection.

"The more serious charge is that Badshah Khan is playing into the hands of Afghanistan. I consider the Badshah to be incapable of any underhand dealing. He would not allow the Frontier Province to be absorbed by Afghanistan.

"As his friend, and because I am his friend, I must admit one failing of his. He is highly suspicious, especially of British professions and intentions. I would urge on all to overlook this failing, which is by no means peculiar to him. Only it does not sit well on a leader of his eminence. I contend that though I have called it a failing, and which it is in one way, in another, it is to be regarded as a virtue, in that, he cannot, even if he tries, conceal his thoughts. He is too honest to hide them."

His speeches were interpreted to mean that he was hankering after a geographical reunion. It was supposed to be a vain hope calculated to irritate the Muslims. He was, therefore, advised to plead for co-operation and collaboration between the two parts of India. He was not guilty of entertaining the vain hope, he said, though he would ever welcome a reunion, based on an appreciation of mutual interest. He had never any intention of unnecessarily hurting the feeling of anyone, much less of his Muslim brethren. What, however, he had pleaded for, was more than co-operation. He was pleading for the correct behaviour in every case on the part of the major community. He warned them against the danger, in a spirit of vengeance, of falling into the trap of the two-nation theory. To become or not to become a separate nation was for the major party to determine. They,

the major community, would never succeed in coming to a right decision, if they falsely prided themselves on their superior numbers. To say that there was danger in numbers was as true, as to say that there was safety in numbers. It was now time to discard pride and folly in exchange for humility and wisdom. Thus, he had received a telegram from one Muslim League secretary complaining of ill-treatment by Hindus in large numbers of a few Muslim passengers. He did not know what truth there was in that complaint. He was sorry that he received many such messages which, on investigation, were found to be devoid of truth or highly exaggerated, but, by way of illustration, the telegram was enough for him. He would be glad to find that there was no truth in the message, but if there was, it was proof of the arrogance and the ignorance of the Hindus, which would discredit anybody.

He then referred to the visit he had from Sikh friends and a letter from one Sikh youth, who complained that he was neglecting those whom he claimed as his friends. He was proud to claim friendship with the Sikhs. It was, when the tragedy of Nankana Saheb took place, that the Sikhs had undertaken to follow his teaching of non-violence and truth, whereby they had lost nothing. He personally did not see any difference between Sikhism and Hinduism. They were varieties of the same faith. When he read the Granth Saheb written in Devanagari characters, he had not much difficulty in following the language. The thought in the various *bhajans* of Nanak Saheb and other Sikh gurus was derived from the Vedas and the Puranas. But at the same time, he did not mind the Sikhs regarding themselves as distinct from the Hindus. Thus regarded, he admitted that theirs was a desolate condition. The remedy, no doubt, was in their own hands. The Sikhs had to come up to the infinitely higher bravery that non-violence would give them, as compared to the bravery of the sword. The Sikhs were industrious. They were to be found even in Canada. They were responsible largely for building the railway to Nairobi and several other things he could mention. He adjured them to shed the drink habit and the enervation brought about by the luxurious habits in which Sikh women, he had heard, were indulging. It would not do to remind him that others were no better. The Sikhs, if they were to keep up their renown, the fewness of number could only be made up for by their being unequalled in courage and correct thinking born of simple life. The sword was a rusty weapon.

Its very effective substitute was the force of the spirit which cost nothing and which was indestructible.

The audience were naturally anxious to know what took him to Viceroy's House that day. He had not gone to see His Excellency. He had gone to be with Jawaharlal and other friends. He could not satisfy their curiosity beyond the fact that they had met. In this connection, he would ask the newspapers not to anticipate events. In times of stress or delicacy, anticipation of events was positively harmful to the country.

He was being rebuked for championing the forlorn causes and thus wasting his life, told Gandhi on July 2nd. He should, especially, in the winter of his life, retire or use his popularity for handling the popular causes. He gladly admitted the charge of championing the forlorn causes, but could not subscribe to the charge that he was thereby wasting his life. He was told by way of illustration that he was trying to twist a rope of sand in trying to popularize Hindustani with the two scripts, Devanagari and Urdu, especially when Pakistan had now become an established fact. He strongly dissented from the view. He believed that he had the wisdom not to subscribe to the doctrine that Pakistan was supposed to enunciate. The present for him was the moment, when he should diligently study both scripts and speak in a language which was a proper mixture of the two. It should also be remembered that there were a very large number of Hindus in the north who knew only Urdu, written in Urdu script. Were these Hindus now to forget the Urdu script and the Urdu language and take up the learning of Hindi language written in Devanagari script? He submitted that there was method in his madness so called. The real test for measuring the quality of a particular step was that whether, if nobody else followed it, it would be useless for the poineer, as would be an endeavour to make a rope out of sand. Applying the test to his Hindustani idea, if he were the only one in India to know the two scripts and equally at ease with Hindi and Urdu, he would pass as a distinguished scholar, much wanted both in Pakistan and the Indian Union. Unfortunately for him, he was no scholar, and his Hindustani was not musical enough to capture the imagination. Incidentally, he should also mention that it was a vicious suggestion that, in the evening of life, one should lend weight only to the popular causes. The popular causes needed no further weight and often popular causes, like popular superstitions, had to

be resisted with all one's might however feeble that might was. He, therefore, invited his audience to resist the mad wave, that was sweeping across the land. No cause, that was intrinsically just, could ever be described as forlorn.

The next day, Gandhi referred to the *bhajan* of the evening whose first line meant that the people would laugh at the fish, which being in water, so behaved, as to feel thirsty. The condition of men living on God's earth, and yet not knowing Him, was very like the condition of the imaginary fish. How it was to be wished that men knew their state, in which case they would not live in the state of degradation which was their lot today. Happily for India, the savagery was confined to the cities and the villages round the cities. These villages could not be counted by thousands in a country, 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. It was as yet a matter of luck that thousands of other villages remained unaffected by the madness raging round the cities and the neighbouring villages.

He then referred to a letter he had received, complaining that the hopelessly insignificant minority of the Brahmins was faring badly in that the admission of Brahmin boys and Brahmin girls to colleges and services was becoming increasingly difficult, because of the anti-Brahmin movement. He could sympathize with the complainant, because, hitherto being more receptive, more industrious and more eager to gain knowledge, the Brahmins seemed to have a monopoly, not because of any brute force they exercised, but because of their superior qualities. But though he sympathized with the Brahmins in their lot, he did not share their grief or their disappointment. In the first instance, he could not appreciate their considering themselves as a minority. If we were one nation, then there could be no question of minority and majority. He might as well complain of being a minority, and then imagine himself to be hurt, that he could not enjoy all the privileges he might wish for. And he would, therefore, advise his Brahmin friends to forget that they were a class or group apart from the ocean of India's humanity. Considering them even as Hindus, rather than Indians, the sons of the same soil, there was to be no high and no low in the ocean of Hinduism. If the Brahmins ceased to consider themselves as a minority, they would be proud to share the majesty of the ocean of Indian or Hindu humanity, and could feel with a drop in the ocean, if it was not isolated from the latter, the greatness of the ocean, which carried on its broad bosom

thousands of mighty steamships. After all, what were the colleges and the services in terms of the millions of villagers, living in the seven lakhs of India's villages? He even suggested that the Brahmin friends should feel happy that they were no longer exposed to the temptation of having to go to the colleges or to services under the Government. Such persons could only be few and far between. Those who refused to take part in the unseemly struggle for entrance to colleges or to services were the real servants of India. Knowledge was not confined within the four walls of a school or a college. It was open for every industrious boy or girl to gather real knowledge outside schools and colleges. And in this connection, he would commend to them the Nayee Talim and all it meant. He further reminded them of what he had said about the validity only of those rights which were directly derived from duty well performed. They would then immediately realize that there was no such inherent right for anyone to be admitted to Government colleges. But if there was such a right belonging to any boy or girl, it was his or hers, who had hitherto been criminally neglected.

A Brahmin's duty was to know God and to enable others to do likewise. And the right that was derived from the duty would be to be fed and to be clothed decently and honourably by the community which he served.

I Too Am A Socialist

1947

GANDHI gave a talk at the Delhi Provincial Political Conference on July 2, 1947. Pointing towards Jayaprakash Narayan, he said: "He holds the reins of the Socialist Party. But I, too, am a socialist."

"Nearly fifty years ago," Gandhi went on, "when I was practising law in South Africa, many people used to call themselves socialists. But those people were less of socialists than I was. I used to work among the labourers. I have made this part of my life's work. And this is true socialism. I have always considered myself a true servant of the peasants and of the workers. There is a difference in my and Jayaprakash Narayan's method of approach towards socialism. I am firmly of the opinion that even a king can be a socialist by becoming a servant of the people."

If we wished to make both the ruler and the ruled socialists, how would we do it, Gandhi asked. We could convert the people to socialism by our personal example. It was said that there were only two ways of converting a ruler—either by beheading him, or by making him abdicate. But his way was to make the ruler a socialist through love. To kill anybody was absurd. If you taught thousands of people to kill each other, you would not have the rule of the socialists but of the killers.

The Viceroy might call himself a Congressman, as the speaker did. But would the Viceroy abdicate his throne, if he asked him to do so? Likewise, there were many who called themselves Congressmen, but were they true Congressmen, as he was a true socialist? There were many who were lost in wealth and the pleasures it brought.

He then added:

"I firmly believe in truth and love. And by love, I do not mean the love of the husband for the wife. Nor do I mean the love between father and the son, for that too is based on self-interest. Love for me means the relationship between a devotee and his god.

"In South Africa, though the whites considered me their enemy many of them came to me as friends. If socialism means befriending one's enemies, I should be treated as a true socialist. This conception of socialism is my own. All the socialists should learn socialism from me. Only then, we can establish a true workers' and peasants' raj. I do not, however, believe in the type of socialism preached by the Socialist Party. You may treat what I say, as a cry in the wilderness and not listen to me. There are people who abuse me today and call me a madman.

"I cannot teach you violence, as I do not myself believe in it. I can only teach you not to bow your head before any one, even at the cost of your life. Therein lies true courage. No one can deprive me of this courage. Even when I die, you will have to admit that Gandhi was a true socialist."

In an editorial "Who Is a Socialist?", he wrote:

"Socialism is a beautiful word and, so far as I am aware, in socialism, all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high, because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low, because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

"In it, the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion, there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society, all the world over, there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, and that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these, there are subdivisions. In the unity of my conception, there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

"But, in order to reach this state, we may not look on the things philosophically and say that we need not make a move, until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life, we may go on giving addresses, and forming parties and, hawk-like, seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

"Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one, and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If,

however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

"This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. And hence, the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off the head equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach the truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and vice versa. Hence, has it been said that they are the faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable, without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body, and you have untruth and violence in you.

"Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge, there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above, the existence of such a society is impossible."

In the second article on socialism, he wrote:

"Truth and non-violence must incarnate in socialism. In order that they can, the votary must have a living faith in God. A mere mechanical adherence to truth and non-violence is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence I have said that Truth is God. This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in, but is not the body. And he who denies the existence of that great Force, denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. The socialism of such takes them nowhere, what to say of the society in which they live.

"If such be the case, does it then mean that no socialist believes in God? If there be any, why have they not made any visible progress? Then again, many godly persons have lived before now; why have they not succeeded in founding a socialistic state?

"It is very difficult completely to silence these two doubts. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a

believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and belief in God. It is equally safe to say that godly men as a rule never commended socialism to the masses.

"Superstitions have flourished in the world, in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism itself, untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway.

"The fact is that it has always been a matter of strenuous research to know this great Force and its hidden possibilities.

"My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of satyagraha. It is not, however, ever claimed that all the laws of satyagraha have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of satyagraha. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral."

On July 4, in the course of his prayer speech, Gandhi said that the question that was being put to him was: Did he ever think that the swaraj of his dreams was going to be born out of the present regime which was to culminate in full dominion status on August 15, at the latest? Was he not ashamed of the non-violence of the past thirty years, which had resulted in the violence that had been stalking the country? He was very sorry to have to confess that he saw no sign of the Kingdom of God being born out of the coming dominion status. He hoped that the dominion status was offered, in order to anticipate the final date of the withdrawal of the British rule. Without it, they felt unable to devise a scheme, whereby the "Quit India" date of June 30 next could be put earlier. Be that as it may, it was open to both the new states, as soon as they framed their own constitutions, to declare complete independence of the exclusive family of the British dominions and aim at a family of independent world states, which necessarily ruled out all the internal armies. He could not visualize a dog-in-the-manger policy for India, whereby it would become a menace to the world peace, another Japan or Germany calling itself falsely a democracy. Democracy and the military spirit, he held to be a contradiction in terms. A democrat relied upon the force not of the arms his state could flaunt in the face of the world, but on the moral force that his state could put at the disposal of the world. If by India's effort, such a world federation of free and independent states was brought into being, the hope of the Kingdom of

God, otherwise called Ram Raj, might legitimately then be entertained. Before that happy event, however, took place, these two new states which today were enemies of each other would have to become friends and associates. He was sorry to confess that the signs pointed the contrary way.

And the second taunt really was the corollary of the first one and vice versa. He had every reason to be ashamed of the result of over thirty years of non-violence so called. He had already admitted that our non-violence was of the weak. But the weak of heart could not claim to represent any non-violence at all. The proper term was the passive resistance. Passive resistance was a preparation for the active resistance of arms. Had it been the non-violence of the strong, the practice of a generation would have made the recent orgies of the destruction of life and property impossible. Then, there would have been no need for the rationing of cloth and of food. If the people knew the working of the law of truth and non-violence, they would themselves regulate the matter of shortage. He had never subscribed to the belief that the shortage could not be locally made good. Such a big country like India should disdain to share the world's production of food and cloth, when the world was suffering from a shortage due to the insensate destruction wrought by the terrible war. All that was needed in India was solid, steady and hard work put in by the millions of India, wisely and intelligently directed. There was no dearth of wisdom and skill in the country. And lastly, if there was the true grasp of non-violence and truth, the people would not look to the civil service which, he thought, was described by the late Mr. Montagu as a wooden machine. These gentlemen were experts of a kind. But they were never employed for the benefit of the nation. They had to keep the foreign rule going somehow or other. And they were too few to handle successfully the present work of reviving the drooping spirits of a nation of starving and naked millions. Now the business men, the producers and the scientists should be impressed into willing service for the nation in dire need. Will the servicemen rise to the occasion, and will the members of the Government go out of the red-tape rut and woo the public to help themselves? How or why could all this happen, if there was no non-violence and no truth in us?

"The two independent dominions, known as India and Pakistan, will come into existence on August 15, 1947," announced the Indian

Independence Bill presented in the British Parliament on July 4th. The British Government decided to give up by August 15th, all responsibility for the government of any of the territories then included in British India and Parliamentary control over the two dominions. The British paramountcy over the Indian states and the Tribal Areas was to lapse also simultaneously.

On July 5th, Gandhi devoted his prayer discourse to the Indian Independence Bill. It compelled postponement of every other topic to another occasion. He did not propose to examine in detail all the twenty sections of the elaborate bill. He was ill-disposed with many critics to read a sinister meaning in the bill. The fact that there were two Indias, instead of one, was bad enough in itself. Both had the same status. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and the Muslim League were entitled to claim the full credit for bringing about a state of things which seemed to be impossible, only as it were yesterday. They had undone the solemn declaration of the Cabinet Mission. And they had succeeded in compelling the consent both from the Congress and the Sikhs to the division. The thing that was in itself bad did not become good because the parties concerned had accepted it, no matter that the causes, dictating the acceptance, were different in each case. It was hardly any comfort that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah did not get all that he wanted. The difference was not at all in kind. He wanted a sovereign state. That he had in the fullest measure, Pakistan had the same status as India.

As he read and re-read the bill, he saw that the three parties had subjected themselves consciously or unconsciously to public judgement in terms of the bill. It was true that the British were divesting themselves of all power. But they had become party to the division and they had two new members in the family of the Commonwealth possessing conflicting ideals and interests. So long as they two had any connection with Great Britain, the latter would be judged by the action following the Indian Independence Bill, rather than by its language, however generous and just it might read. He then admitted that it would be a superhuman task to reconcile the conflicting interests and treat them equally. What would happen if one declared complete independence, when the constitution act was passed by its Constituent Assembly?

The relation of the princes remained in a most unsatisfactory condition. He had no hesitation in saying that the British Government

had lacked the courage, since the inception of the Cabinet Mission effort to do the right thing, no matter what the cost was. And here again the British honour was at stake. The British would certainly be blamed, if any mishap occurred. The dangerous situation had not been cleared by the bill. Both the new dominions had an unenviable legacy, if they had the interests of the people of the states at heart, if the people were the real masters and the princes their trustees, not merely euphemistically, but in law and in fact.

Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and the Muslim League had, by their act of secession and severance, invited the world to judge them by their behaviour towards the Muslims, as also towards the non-Muslims. Surely, there were many sects, chief among whom were the Sunnis and the Shias, politically, the Nationalists and the Muslim Leaguers, the Baluchis, the Sindhis, the Pathans, the Punjabis, the Bengalis, and the Muslims of the Indian Union. He was daily besieged by the large Hindu and Sikh minorities and not as often by the Christians and the Parsis. He was asked whether there was ground for the fear that there would be an attempt to estrange the Scheduled Classes from their Hindu brethren. Was Pakistan a means of converting the non-Muslims to a special brand of Islam? True religion was a universal belief in the one and only God. The world was fast growing out of the dogmas and the creeds, which had so sickened it, that it had become confused and it had begun to deny the very existence of the Maker. Happily, that stage of negation was quickly passing and enlightened faith in the Supreme Maker of the universe was taking its place. Was the Islam of Pakistan going to be in the vanguard of that movement for restoration of universal faith? Or was it to pass through darkness and denial of God in the name of God? He hoped that the doubts he had mentioned would be quickly dissolved.

Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had unwittingly placed Hinduism also on its trial. The Hindus had the rare opportunity of refining Hinduism of all dross and showing by strict justness that the brand of Hinduism of the Indian Union was the same as universal religion. He had said only the day before, that those who believed in India as one nation could have no minority and majority question. All were entitled to equal privileges and to equal treatment. Thus viewed, the Indian Independence Bill could be taken as the final examination of all the parties involved in the bill. It was possible to turn Pakistan, which he had declared an evil, into unadulterated good, if all the forebodings

were dispelled, enmities were turned into friendship, and mutual distrust gave place to trust.

Addressing the prayer meeting the next day, Gandhi said that he hoped that the referendum in the Frontier Province was to be without violence. Badshah Khan and Khudai Khidmatgars were pledged to non-violence. They were to prove that they lived up to their beliefs. Why should he not expect the same from the Leaguers when it was at least a question of Muslim against Muslim?

There was something wrong in the fact that they missed the enthusiasm that should accompany such a great event as the imminent advent of full freedom. The reason for the lack of enthusiasm was undoubtedly to be found in the division of the country into two states which were to be turned into two armed camps. For, there was to be no common defence force. The army was to be divided, and preparations were being made apace to that end. They used to talk glibly during the glorious and strenuous days of opposition to the British rule of having no army for the suppression of internecine quarrels which would be non-existent and they wanted no defence force against a foreign enemy. Now, alas! their military expenditure was maintained at a very high level without any near prospect of substantial reduction. Indeed, he visualized a definite increase in the military expenditure, all for fighting among themselves. They were to be engaged in a ludicrous race for the increase of armaments; no nation-building expenditure, not for education and the like. It was to be all for mutual slaughter. He could discover in this no reason for gratification or glorification. The outlook was very dismal. Was India's freedom a preparation for the abandonment of all they had learnt to prize as dear to them? Instead of self-glorification, it was a time for deep self-introspection, self-examination, self-castigation. As the chief actor in the fight for independence during the past thirty years, he was certainly full of searching questions within himself. Was the fight, acclaimed as noble, to result in this the approaching inglorious end?

He cried with the Vedic seer: "O Lord! Lead us from darkness unto light."

On July 7, his message was read out at the prayer gathering:

"Last evening, I showed you why the coming freedom seemed to create no enthusiasm. This evening I propose to show how we can, if we will, turn the calamity into a blessing. It will profit us nothing

to brood over the past or to blame this party or that. Technically, freedom is yet to come, a few days hence. In fact the parties having jointly accepted the situation, there is no turning back. Only the inscrutable Providence can undo what men have agreed to do.

"One easy and ready way out is for the Congress and the League to come together and arrive at a mutual understanding without the intervention of the Viceroy. The League has to make the first move. I do not at all suggest the undoing of Pakistan. Let that be treated as an established fact, beyond dispute or discussion. But they can sit together in a mud hut, large enough to accommodate not more than ten representatives, and undertake not to part, till they have reached an agreement. I dare swear that if such an event occurs, it will be infinitely better than the bill recognizing the independence of India cut up into two states, enjoying equal status.

"Neither the Hindus nor the Muslims are happy over what is now happening before their helpless selves. This is first-hand evidence, unless the Hindus and Muslims who daily see me or correspond with me are deceiving me. But—it is a big but—I seem to be aiming at the impossible. Now that British intervention has done the trick, how can the League be expected to come down to their adversaries and produce an agreed settlement, as between brothers and friends?

"There is an alternative which is also almost, if not quite, as difficult. This creation of two opposing armies out of one, hitherto with one and a common goal, whatever it was, must frighten every lover of India. Will the two armies be created, not in order to face and fight a common danger but to destroy one another and to demonstrate to a gaping world that they were unfit for any other purpose but to fight one another unto death?

"I have put the prospect in its awful nakedness, so that everyone may see and shun it. The alternative escape is undoubtedly attractive. Will the vast mass of Hindus and those who had joined them in the struggle for independence realize the danger in its proper perspective and rise to the occasion, and swear, even now, that they do not wish to have any army at all, or, at least, refuse ever to use it against their Muslim brethren, whether in the Indian Union or outside it in Pakistan? This proposal is tantamount to asking the Hindus and their associates to turn thirty years' weakness into strength of great beauty. Perhaps to state the problem thus is to demonstrate its absurdity—may be God has been known before now to turn man's

folly into wisdom. The effort is worth making for the sake of all the parties who have subscribed to the dangerous division of the army into two self-destroying warring camps.

On July 8, Gandhi referred to a countryman from the south who had asked a question, which the latter invited him to answer, as had become his wont of late, in his prayer speeches. The question was: "George Bernard Shaw has remarked that 'an Englishman is never in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles; he supports his king on loyal principles and cuts off his king's head on republican principles.' I am eager to know from you, under which of these principles the Englishman is now quitting India. Is the Englishman glad over the present economic and the political condition of our beloved country? Does he feel satisfied in the secession of Travancore and Hyderabad states from the Indian Union? Has he any axe to grind in scrapping the May '46 paper and bringing forward in its place the recent partition plan? Does he feel for the horrible happenings in Noakhali and Bihar and the Punjab, which happenings have forced the Congress to accept that plan? What can be the reason or the idea behind Mr. Churchill and his company endorsing the plan? You have often stated that you know the mind of an Englishman better than any other Indian, and you have repeatedly been advising us in your post-prayer speeches to trust the faith, sincerity and good intentions of the Englishmen in transferring power to our hands. I, therefore, believe that you should be in a position to make matters clear. You alone can dispel our doubts in a convincing manner."

Gandhi observed that he could only paraphrase the idea in his speech. Shaw's banter was by no means exhaustive, nor were the Englishman's resources. He had no doubt that the Englishman was quitting India on principle. Man had the supreme knack of deceiving himself. The Englishman was the supremest among men. He was quitting, because he had discovered that it was wrong on economic and on political grounds to hold India in bondage. Herein he was sincere. It would not be denied, however, that sincerity was quite consistent with self-deception. He was self-deceived in that he believed that he could not leave India to possible anarchy, if such was to be India's lot. He was quite content to leave India as a cockpit between the two organized armies. Before quitting, he was setting the

seal of approval on the policy of playing off one community against another. And he lacked the courage to do the right, so far as the states were concerned. The speaker hoped that before he finally left on the 15th of August, he would bring the two parties together, now that one had got all it wanted. He could do so, if he willed it. Travancore and Hyderabad had not yet become independent states. He, the speaker, admitted freely that if the Englishman left India in an uncertain condition and left the possibility of the several warring states, all independent of England, and, therefore, of one another, he could not conceive a greater reflection on the British name than this would be. Dominion status would then stink in the nostrils. But he had not given up the hope that British statesmanship would not have declared utter bankruptcy before August 15. Till then, he preferred to defer judgement, in spite of the correspondent's profound distrust of British declarations, however high-minded they might be to read. Let their acts be the real judge of their words. He would believe a man's word, unless he had good reason to doubt it. That Mr. Churchill & Co. were now disposed to bless the bill for Indian independence proved that they had realized the economic and the political necessity of the step. He, however, had no hesitation in admitting that recent signs were portentous enough to rouse suspicion. He did not believe in dying before his death.

Seeing that India was cut into two, people had to consider their conduct accordingly, observed Gandhi on July 10. Unfortunately, it had become the fashion nowadays to act, as if they were enemies one of the other. He could not subscribe to any such belief, nor did he approve of the method of appeasement—a word that had come to have a bad odour. If he did not believe in appeasement, why, he was asked, did he dance attendance on Jinnah Saheb for eighteen days in 1944? A friendly approach was not one of appeasement. An appeasement was possible between enemies. And this was supposed to have happened about Hitler. England and Germany were opposing powers. The late Mr. Chamberlain was supposed to have been guilty of the policy of appeasement. The speaker owned no enemies. He, undoubtedly, made an offer to the Qaid-e-Azam of which he was proud. If Jinnah Saheb had accepted the offer, he could have been master in what might have been called the Pakistan area, but there would have been common subjects, as between friends. They would then have had one India before the whole world and free

of all domination by a third power. All the bloodshed and the loot and arson would have been avoided. Now, they were snarling at one another. He refused to scent independence in this barbarous state. He could not be enthusiastic over the independence that was coming till the look of things was changed during the next thirty-five days. He wanted the people to develop bravery of the highest type that would surrender nothing to violence and much to genuine friendliness, not friendliness that was euphemism for hypocrisy.

What then were they to do, the Hindus, the Sikhs and the other non-Muslims in Pakistan? They would not anticipate evil and leave their homes for the fear of evil overtaking them. He would give the Muslim fellow-countrymen credit for common honesty and human behaviour. There were mandirs and gurudwaras in Pakistan areas. Were they to be demolished? Was admission to them to be forbidden to the Hindus, the Sikhs and the others? He could not bring himself to entertain any such fear. Taking the contrary example, one of the finest Jumma Masjids in the world was in the Indian Union, the Taj was there, the Aligarh University was there. Did the partition make the slightest difference in the Muslims approaching all these great places and many others he could name? He thought not.

Then there was the question of the Hindus, who could not stay in their own homes in Pakistan through fear, vague or real. They could not, if their trade or movements were restricted, and if they were treated as aliens in their own province. It was, undoubtedly, the duty of the provinces in the Union to receive such refugees with open arms and to give them all reasonable facilities. They should be able to feel that they had not come to a strange land. The whole of India was the home of every Indian who considered himself and behaved as such, no matter to what faith he belonged. The condition for the new comer was, as he had said in Hardwar, that he must be as sugar was to milk. He must aim at adding sweetness and richness to the life around him.

The next day, Gandhi referred to the criticism that had reached his ears in regard to the fact that, while the Qaid-e-Azam had been appointed the Governor-General of Pakistan, the Congress leaders had agreed to keep Lord Mountbatten on as the Governor-General of India. It had been hinted that the Congress leaders had weakened and, by asking Lord Mountbatten to stay on, had shown that they were still dependent on England. He, the speaker, wished to ask such

critics to rid their minds of such suspicion. Could they imagine men like Nehru and the Sardar, a born fighter, ever bowing the knee or bootlicking anyone? He wanted them to know that after August 15, it was within their power to ask anyone to become their Governor-General. If it had been his own choice, he might even have chosen a Harijan girl. But he had no wish to deceive the people in refusing to suspect Lord Mountbatten's appointment. After all, the people could always fight him, if he proved false to them. It was known now through the newspapers that, in the first instance, both India and Pakistan had agreed to have Lord Mountbatten as their common Governor-General. But at the last moment, Jinnah Saheb had changed his mind and had nominated himself. The Congress leaders could have then done likewise, but they did not like to go back on their plighted word. He sensed nothing wrong in this. Lord Mountbatten would be on trial in his new job, in spite of the fact that he would be the constitutional head of the Government. The speaker hoped that he would come through the test with flying colours by being their servant, which is what the appointment stood for. They would be foolish to imagine that no Englishman could ever be a friend of India and loyal to her, or that Lord Mountbatten would not be a servant of the Indian Union, because he was of royal blood and because now his nephew was going to marry the future Queen of England. They should never mistrust anyone, until and unless he proved himself unworthy.

Gandhi felt that the Governor-Generalship of Pakistan was going to be an acid test for Jinnah Saheb. Doubtless, he was taking up the office to show to the world that he had acquired an Islamic state. But the acquisition would be nothing worth, unless he followed in the footsteps of the great Caliphs. He referred to the Khalifa Omar, in particular, of whom it was said that he never wanted anything for himself. His sole concern was meting out even-handed justice to the people under him. If Jinnah Saheb becomes the Governor-General with the intent to wear a crown of thorns, to be the first servant of Pakistan and not as a ruler, then he would make Pakistan a land worth living in. His Governor-Generalship would be a test not only for him, but for Islam too. He hoped that Jinnah Saheb would come through it with flying colours.

Some time back, he had mentioned that he was torn between several conflicts. He felt that Bihar was calling him, so was Noakhali

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where he had commenced work among the riot-affected refugees and had tried to specialize in the work. When, a month ago, he left Patna, he was under the impression that he would return to Bihar inside of a week. But events had taken place during the month in such quick succession, that, perhaps, a generation had been packed into a month. So he was now vegetating in New Delhi, hoping that thereby, he was serving both Bihar and Noakhali. Then he fancied that the Punjab was also calling him. He saw at present no guiding-star unmistakably telling him which way to take. And he, therefore, went by the saying that had gripped him years ago, "When in doubt, stay where you are."

At one stage, he thought of going to Uttar-Kashi, before going anywhere else. The late Malaviya had given him a glowing account of the holy place and of the holy men one came across in that place. Birla, on hearing of his wish, undertook to make all the arrangements to enable him to perform the pilgrimage, practically on foot. This was an added inducement for him. Mirabehn, who had gone to Uttar-Kashi in quest of peace and inspiration from the Himalayas, wrote to say that the climate at Uttar-Kashi will not be suitable till September. So the trip was dropped for the present.

The public on hearing of his proposed visit to Uttar-Kashi began to speculate that he was now thinking of retiring to the Himalayas because of his differences with the leaders. He had his differences with the leaders, no doubt. The dream of his Ram Raj did not seem to be materializing. But he had developed the quality of detachment to a large extent. He was doing what he had done all along, show the right path, and proclaim the truth from house-tops, irrespective of whether anyone listened or not.

Speaking at the prayer meeting on July 12th, Gandhi referred to his promise to do or die in Noakhali. He had said that he would not leave Noakhali, until the Hindus and the Muslims assured him that he could go without feeling the slightest anxiety about honour, life and property of the Hindus in Noakhali. But who was he to achieve such a result? He was but a servant of God. If God wished it, He would make him the instrument of such service. If He did not, he would be quite content to do or die in Noakhali. He would just live in the midst of the people of Noakhali, rendering such service, as he could. His friends had told him that he was crazy to attach so much importance to Noakhali. What was Noakhali, as compared to the

whole of India? they all argued. Why should he not use his talents for the service of India as a whole, instead of confining himself to Noakhali? If things were all right in India, they would be all right in Noakhali. But, he was made differently. His mother, an illiterate village woman had taught him, "The atom reflected the universe." She had explained to him that he should take care that he did the right thing. His universe was his own immediate surroundings. If he served them, the universe would take care of itself.

A friend from Noakhali had written to him that if he did not return there by August 15, he might have to repent. August 15th was the dead-line for the division of India and transfer of power from British to Indian hands. In fact the division of India, was a settled plan already. But God could upset the plans of men. An earthquake could destroy the whole of India before the appointed day. A foreign invasion might upset man's pretty and petty plans.

But humanly speaking, Pakistan would be a legally established fact on August 15. He had left Noakhali to go to Bihar. He had done a lot for the Muslim brethren in Noakhali. The number of deaths in Bihar far exceeded that in Noakhali. It was nearly 10,000, whereas in Noakhali it was under 500. When the call came from Bihar, he went there. He was, therefore, bound to take Bihar on his way to Noakhali. He was anxious to reach there, as early as possible. He felt out of place in Delhi. It was not so in Bihar and Noakhali. He wanted them to pray that God might enable him to return to Noakhali early and fulfil his promise.

Jinnah, at a press conference on the morning of July 13, assured the minorities in the Pakistan dominion that they would have protection with regard to their religion, faith, life, property and culture. They would, in all respect, be treated as citizens of Pakistan without any discrimination, but they would also have the obligations of citizenship. The minorities would have to be loyal to the state and owe true allegiance to it. The same principle, Jinnah emphasized, would apply to the minorities in the Indian Union. One could not have the minorities disloyal to the state and sabotaging its activities. Every citizen must be loyal to his state.

On July 13, Gandhi said that he had read a brief report of Jinnah Saheb's press conference, in the course of which it had gladdened his heart to learn that Jinnah Saheb had assured complete freedom of faith and religious worship and full security of life and property

to all the minorities living in Pakistan. But while any leader might say a thing and say it sincerely, it did not follow that the advice was straightway acted upon. It was sad that, in spite of the achievement of the division, the news of stabbings, murders, loot and arson came from everywhere. He had many Hindu friends in Sind who were leaving their home, because they felt they could not live there any longer. Now Karachi was going to be the capital of Pakistan. He would like to ask Jinnah Saheb, whether he was going to wait till August 15, to offer protection to the Hindus in Sind. If he were in Jinnah Saheb's place, he would be sad beyond measure, if a single Hindu deserted his own home in Pakistan through fear of injustice. While the Qaid-e-Azam was going to be the Governor-General of Pakistan, it was true that he could do nothing without the advice of his ministers; yet that did not mean that he was going to lose his hold over Muslim League. On the other hand, his political power would be even greater. Therefore, it was Jinnah Saheb's duty to forbid such happenings, as were reported from Sind and elsewhere in the dominion of which he was to be the Governor-General. A man or the government of a country could only be judged by its actions and this applied equally to India. Some Muslims of the U. P. had the fear, whether they could live there any more. It was the duty of the government there to give them every assurance that the U. P. would always be their home, where they could as hitherto live without fear. The British had carried on their rule through the policy of "divide and rule", but their power was over, and so should be the favouritism. What mattered it, if a minority got a little more than its share of the spoils of service or office anywhere? The minorities were entitled to the fullest justice. Efficiency and merit alone should count, and the spoils of office given to minorities over a very long period by the British to serve their own ends should no longer lure them. The minorities must realize that all these were in the nature of bribes. After all, the British could not remove untouchability. It was the Hindus themselves who had opened all ancient temples in South India, a fact that gladdened his heart, for it was by removing the stain of untouchability that Hinduism could live. No privileges should be given to anyone in the new India. It was the poor and the neglected, the downtrodden and the weak that should be their special care and attention. A Brahmin should not grudge it, if more money was spent on the uplift of Harijans. At the same time, a Brahmin

may not be done down simply because he was a Brahmin. In fact, the Brahmins were a very small minority. There must be pure and undefiled justice for everyone in both Pakistan and Hindustan.

"It is said that my speeches nowadays are depressing," Gandhi observed in his written message on July 14.

"Some even suggest that I should not speak at all. This multitude of advisers reminds me of a painter who had exposed his painting in a shop window without glass, inviting the critics to mark the parts they did not like. The result was a daub. The painter had simply tried to show that it was impossible to please all parties. He was, therefore, satisfied that he had painted a good picture. His business was to produce a work, which satisfied his artistic taste. Mine is a similar case. I hope that I never speak for the sake of speaking. I speak because I feel that I have something to say to the people. It is true that I do not agree with what many of my closest friends have done, or are doing. Whilst I am in Delhi and I have an opinion about some current events, I cannot help giving that opinion. And what are the differences that matter? If you analyse them, you would find only one fundamental difference to which all the others could be traced. Non-violence is my creed. It never was of the Congress. With the Congress, non-violence has always been a policy. A policy takes the shape of a creed whilst it lasts, no longer. The Congress had every right to change the creed, when it found it necessary. A creed can never admit of any change. Now though according to the Congress constitution the policy abides, the practice has undoubtedly altered the policy. Technicians may quarrel with the fact. You and I cannot, must not. Why should not the makers of the present Congress change their policy in fact? The law will take care of itself. It should also be noted that, in the Congress constitution, the word peaceful is used, not non-violent.

"In Bombay, when the Congress met in 1934, I tried hard to have the word peaceful replaced by non-violent, and I failed. Therefore, it is open to give the word 'peaceful' a meaning, probably, less than that of non-violent. I see none. But my opinion is irrelevant. It is for the savants to determine the difference, if any. All that you and I need to realize is that the Congress practice is not non-violent today in the accepted sense of the term. If the Congress was pledged to the policy of non-violence, then there would be no army supported by it. But India sports an army, which may eat up the civilians and

establish military rule in India, unless the people listen to me. Am I to give up all hope of their ever listening to me? I cannot do that whilst there is breath left in me. And if the people do not wish to listen to my non-violent dirge, there is no reason for the critics to dissuade me from speaking to the public.

"Let me make one thing clear. I have frankly and fully admitted that what we had practised during the past thirty years was not non-violent resistance but passive resistance, which only the weak offer because they are unable, not unwilling, to offer an armed resistance. If we knew the use of non-violent resistance, which only those with the hearts of oak can offer, we would present to the world a totally different picture of free India, instead of an India cut in twain, one part highly suspicious of the other and the two too much engaged in mutual strife to be able to think cogently of the food and clothing of the hungry and naked millions, who know no religion but that of the one and only God, who appears to them in the guise of necessaries of life. Not for them the sanguinary strife or cinema pictures showing them how efficiently to cut one another's throats?"

The next day, Gandhi referred to some questions that had been put to him by Bengali friends. He was told that the Hindus in East Bengal feared that now that the province was divided into two, the Hindus of West Bengal would forget them and that the Hindus of East Bengal would be weakened. Gandhi remarked that he could not understand such fears. All were Indians, first and last, wherever they lived and to whatever creed or class or province they belonged. Religion was entirely a personal matter. Each one could approach his creator, as he liked. But the poison of separatism had gone too deep into the soil. When he was in Noakhali, he was just as much at home there as elsewhere. And were the Muslims of East Bengal and the Hindus of Bihar, for example, always going to behave as madmen? He was never going to subscribe to such a fear. He wanted to reiterate that while he did not like the division, it was at the moment a *fait accompli* and they had to face up to it. But it was always possible by correct conduct to lessen an evil and eventually even to bring good out of evil. In spite of the division, the people of the Eastern and Western Bengal were going to be Bengalis and speak the same language. The Hindus of West Bengal must live as friends with the Muslims there. If they did, the Muslims of Eastern Bengal would certainly reciprocate the friendship with their Hindu brothers.

None must look upon the other as his enemy. Only such an action could drive out fear. He added too that West Bengal was better able to help the Hindus in East Bengal, because the government of West Bengal was in their hands.

Gandhi had been asked whether the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee should now be split up into two parts. His answer was a firm negative. The Congress committee there must never look upon Bengal as divided. It would act as before, though there would be sub-committees in the two halves, working under the parent body. The Congress was national. And its doors were open to every Indian who chose to enter its portals.

He was also asked why Prafulla Ghosh and Suresh Banerjee who were of East Bengal were serving as ministers in West Bengal, thus deserting their brothers of East Bengal. He saw no reason whatsoever, why they should not serve in the west. It did not mean that they were deserting their homes. In fact, they would serve as links, and strengthen the bonds between the two provinces.

On July 16, Gandhi referred to the movement for Dravidistan in South India, comprising the population speaking the four Dravidian languages—Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kanarese. Why should this portion of India speaking the four languages be separated from the rest? Had not these languages, rich as they were, drawn largely upon Sanskrit for their richness? He had travelled through the four provinces and he had found no difference between them and the rest of the provinces. It was a myth to consider that those living in the south of the Vindhya range were non-Aryans and those in the north were Aryans. Whatever they might have been at one time, they were so intermixed, that they were one people from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, notwithstanding that India was cut into two. It would be folly to make further divisions. If they did not stop at that division, there would be no end to the independent sovereign states, which would be useless for India and the world. Let it not be said of them that they were fit for one political system only under bondage, and as free men, savage-like, they would split up into as many groups as they liked, each group going its own way. Or would they be held in bondage by one despotic state, possessing an army large enough to bring them under subjection?

In next day's prayer discourse, referring to the newspaper report that the latest campaign against Indians in South Africa had taken

the form of boycott of Indian traders by the European community, accompanied by threats of violence, Gandhi said that he was deeply interested in the problem of Indians in South Africa, having spent twenty years of his life in that country. He would be pained and surprised if the Boers, with whom the Indians did not compete, were in any way associated with violence to the Indians. He recalled with pride, how when he was marching through the Transvaal, probably with two thousand humble Indians, the Boers were uniformly kind to them, who were completely non-violent. He suspected that there were some mischief-makers at the back of this proposed violence. He hoped that the news was highly exaggerated. Field-Marshal Smuts and the South African whites knew that now India was as independent as they, and they were for the time being members of the same Commonwealth, as they. Were their partners to be singled out for an invidious treatment? Was Mrs. Pandit to be baulked of the victory her deputation to the U. N. O. had attained? If Field-Marshal Smuts could not control the unruly element in the community, it was his duty to resign. He called upon Pandit Nehru and Jinnah Saheb to send a joint wire to General Smuts that now that India had come into her own, it was the duty of the Union Government to accord equal rights and protection to the Indians in South Africa.

The speeches in the House of Commons as reported in the newspapers emphasized that dominion status meant independence plus something more. The proof of the pudding lay in the eating. Did the dominion status really mean that all those who became the members of the Commonwealth would become equals? The spoken word to be true had to be supported by corresponding action throughout the Commonwealth.

Lord Mountbatten was still the Viceroy. He was a great admiral and belonged to the Royal House. He should use his great personal influence to secure justice for Indians of South Africa. The speaker warned the Indian compatriots to cohere together. Let there be no divisions among them. The rich should not neglect the poor.

Referring next to the question of untouchability, Gandhi said that South India, except Cochin, had made big strides in that matter. He complimented Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer for the good work he had done in advising the maharaja to throw open to the Harijans all the temples in Travancore. Now Andhra, British Kerala and Tamil Nad had followed suit. This was a cheering news. But what about Kashi

Vishwanath, the temple in Hardwar and other temples throughout India? He knew that many Harijans wanted economic betterment and educational facilities. This they were entitled to. But for their own sake, the Hindus could not be satisfied, unless temple-entry was complete. In his opinion, the Hindu temples were not pure, till every Hindu, without any distinction whatsoever, was freely entitled to offer worship precisely in the same way, as the tallest among them. Pure Hinduism had no inequality. All were equal in the eye of God. All religions in the world were on their trial today. He wanted Hinduism to come out of the test with full marks.

On July 18th, he told that the Independence of India Bill would be proclaimed the day after. According to it, the Governor-General would be appointed by them, the people of India, and would not be imposed on India as hitherto. Therefore, Lord Mountbatten would be the Governor-General of India by their appointment, precisely as a *chaprasi* could be. This was not said in disparagement. It was a compliment paid to Lord Mountbatten that he had elected to be the Indian Union's servant, deriving his appointment from the people. It was necessary to say this, in order to dispel suspicion, that still lingered in many minds.

He next referred to an open letter written by the editor of *Dawn* to him in the day's issue. *Dawn* was the Qaid-e-Azam's mouthpiece. The editor had taken him to task for saying that Jinnah Saheb's assurances about the protection of the minorities in Pakistan would be valued according to the corresponding deeds of the Muslims in Pakistan. He adhered to his own statement and held that it carried no reflection. He had said the same of the Viceroy and the Congress ministers. The fear that had now seized the Hindus of Sind was an ominous beginning. The editor had further talked about the sufferings and fears of the Muslim minority in the U. P. and he had given a number of instances in support. The speaker would state in reply that even if the said allegations were proved true, there would be no justification for similar treatment in Sind, as Sind's misdeeds would be none in the U. P. He must confess that he had known nothing about the many allegations against U. P. The editor, perhaps, did not know that he had alluded publicly to the allegations about which the speaker knew nothing. As soon as he read the remarks referred to, he wrote to Rafi Saheb and, as he was not in Delhi, he wrote to the chief minister, who wrote in reply and later saw him and told

him that there was great exaggeration in what the editor had written. What was true in it was attempted to be remedied at once and the guilty parties were punished, whenever traced. No pains were spared in order to trace the offenders. But the chief minister added that the aggression in the first instance had come from the Leaguers. He did not seek to justify the Hindu offenders. He and his fellow ministers were doing their best to keep turbulent element under check. The speaker had a suggestion to make to *Dawn* and all the papers, whatever their hue, that they should avoid all exaggeration. In order to give effect to the suggestion, they should appoint a joint board to which all reports about communal trouble would be submitted and even passed on to responsible ministers and, when necessary, given publicity. His suggestion could find favour, only if the editors realized their duty to the public and were anxious that a peremptory stop should be put to all communalism. Division having become a settled fact, it was surely time that the country was allowed to settle down to the constructive work of feeding and clothing the ill-fed and ill-clad millions. Editors had a weighty part to play in the noble task. To foment trouble was ignoble.

Paramountcy

1947

ON JULY 18, 1947, the two new dominions of India and Pakistan were born and 400,000,000 people came into their inheritance of full political freedom, when a Royal Commission of Peers, with the ceremony and ritual, dating back to William the Conqueror's time, solemnly announced in the House of Lords the royal assent to the Indian Independence Bill.

On July 19, Gandhi commenced his prayer speech with the remark that there was nothing of special import that he could pass on to the audience in connection with the day's Working Committee meeting. One thing, however, he thought he should share with them. The members of the Working Committee were deploring the mad desire for holding office that had today seized the Congress ranks. It was a sad commentary on the members of an organization that had identified itself with the masses. How many jobs could any government provide in any case? Government service was only for those who would serve as a matter of duty, as was the case with the top-ranking leaders. It was no use reminding him, that such was not the case under the British rule. They must not do as free men, what they were not ashamed to do as slaves. Any hankering after the government jobs by Congressmen, simply because the Congress was now in power was inconsistent with the Congress ideals.

He then referred to a letter he had received from a man who had written angrily about the rumour that, from August 15, the Union Jack would occupy a corner of the national flag. If this happened, the writer said, he would tear the flag into pieces and rather die than tolerate it. This, the speaker said, was a thoughtless outlook. The Union Jack in itself had committed no crime. The hurt caused to India during long years of subjection had been caused by British officers. But they were now going. Lord Mountbatten was staying on but not as Viceroy. He would henceforth be their first servant, to

carry out the will of the cabinet who were the people's representatives. The speaker saw no harm whatsoever in the Union Jack occupying a corner in their flag, so long as India remained a dominion. It would be an act of courtesy towards their erstwhile enemy. It was a gesture worthy of the tradition that they had patiently built up. The Indian independence measure had become law with an amazing speed. It sometimes took one year to get an important bill through the British Parliament, but this had been passed inside of one week. Whether the British were giving up their hold on India with good intent or otherwise, time alone would show. In the meantime, they must realize that the retention of the Union Jack, for such period, as India was a dominion, was in his opinion a point of honour. Even if, in the past, they looked upon the British as enemies, he himself never looked upon anyone as an enemy—that was no reason for visiting the sins of the fathers on the children. He had been a born fighter and a rebel all his life and he would be the last person in the world to submit to any indignity. As a matter of fact, however, he had heard with sorrow at the Working Committee that the Union Jack was not going to occupy a place on the national flag. He asked the people not to rejoice over the omission. The British Government having recognized their independence, it was open to them to do, as they liked. He was solicitous about their traditions.

On July 20, Gandhi said that some friends were insistently telling him that his prayer discourses were having a depressant effect on the people in general. After all, the freedom for which he had fought all his life was now at their door. He knew that there could be no economic freedom or moral betterment, without political freedom. Therefore, why did he not rejoice? Gandhi admitted that there was some force in this argument. But, as a satyagrahi wedded to truth, he could never say what did not come from the depths of his heart. The partition of India was there, and he could not but be unhappy about it. If, however, what he said depressed them, the fault was not his. He had told them that it was no use crying over spilt milk. He had been a rebel and a fighter all his life and had found great happiness therein. But he had never been defeated in spirit. He could not weep, nor could he make the others do so. He had gone to Noakhali to wipe their tears and tell them not to mourn over the loss of life and property. A satyagrahi knew no defeat. Even if the leaders had made a mistake, there was no consciousness about it. For, they

believed that what they had done was for the good of the country. If they were happy, the audience too felt likewise. It was no part of his duty to seek to deprive them of their happiness. If the Congress decided on celebrations on August 15th, those who felt like joining must join in them. The Congress, as a democratic organization, was never going to force anyone to do anything against his or her wishes. It was true that the British were going. Those few who remained would remain now as their servants to do their bidding. He brought home to the audience the difference between gaining a victory, as the Congress had done, through passive resistance and that gained by the armed force. Now power was going to be in their hands. But the real day of rejoicing would be, when the Hindus and Muslims would live as brothers, even though in the two dominions. He was distressed to hear that the Punjab Muslim League were holding out threats of violence, if the decision of the Boundary Commission did go against their wishes. Some Sikhs had also declared likewise. The speaker deplored this attitude. It was inconsistent with the honour of the parties who had agreed to arbitration. Having agreed, they must conform to the decision.

Gandhi then referred to the terrible tragedy of Burma, the murder of General Aung San and his four other colleagues of the Burmese Interim Government. It was incredible that the very people who had fought for Burma's freedom and brought her to its threshold should have been murdered thus in cold blood by the assassins. He knew Burma and her people fairly well. The Burmese had taken Buddhism from this country. They had been made part of us by the British, but they had now elected to remain separate. Nevertheless, they were our neighbours with close cultural ties. It was sad that the followers of Lord Buddha should resort to such mad violence. He hoped that India would learn a lesson from the sad happening, which was a tragedy not only for Burma but for Asia, and for the whole world. He was afraid that it was not an ordinary murder, but there was political ambition behind the act. Such doings had become the part and parcel of political strife all the world over, and it did not augur well for the future of humanity. He referred to the barbarities in India and pointed a warning finger and hoped that the people would desist from following the path of mutual destruction. He sympathized with the relations of those murdered leaders and with the Burma Government and asked the audience to pray with him that

God would change the hearts of those who had committed those murders for the attainment of their ends. What was needed was not the dagger and the pistol, but the play of reason for change of heart that would rid men's minds of the lust for blood.

In conclusion, he said that two of his suggestions had commended themselves to the editor of *Dawn*. The editor assured him through the columns of his paper that all the minorities would be well treated and perfectly safe in Pakistan, and that they too wanted all to live together as brothers.

His second suggestion regarding the publication of news had also been accepted. The editor had appealed to him as a journalist to take up the task of initiating a committee. The speaker said that he had not the time, and his movements were uncertain. But there was no reason whatsoever, why other journalists should not be approached to the end proposed.

On July 22, Nehru moved the following resolution on the national flag in the Constituent Assembly:

"Resolved that the national flag of India shall be a horizontal tricolour of deep saffron, white and dark green, in equal proportion. In the centre of the white band, there shall be a wheel in navy blue to represent the charkha. The design of the wheel shall be that of the wheel, *chakra*, which appears on the abacus of the Sarnath pillar of Asoka. The diameter of the wheel shall be approximate to the width of the white band. The ratio of the width to the length of the flag shall ordinarily be 2 : 3."

Presenting to the Constituent Assembly the flag of free India, observed Nehru: "There is a slight variation in this flag from the one many of us have used during these past years. The colours are the same. In the white previously there was a symbol of charkha, which symbolized the common man in India, which symbolized the masses, which symbolized their industry, which came to us from the message which Mahatma Gandhi had delivered to the country."

On the National Flag, Gandhi wrote:

"The national flag by the very name was accepted by the nation functioning through the Congress in 1921. Those, therefore, who say that the flag that was at one time the Congress flag has now become the national flag of India are wrong. By making an unnecessary fuss over what they only now call the national flag, albeit unknowingly, they insult the Congress. The Congress has been national, from its

very birth in 1885. It has never represented a party, but by it have been represented all the parties and all Indians. Of course, it is open to this great national organization, any day, to commit suicide by becoming a party machine. The calamity may overtake the Congress, if God's wrath descends upon it. Nevertheless, many will be praying that such a misfortune may never befall it. Is it possible that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's taunt, that the Congress is national only in name but essentially Hindu in action, will ever prove true?

"Here, however, let us confine ourselves to the flag. What has happened is that, having been party to the two divisions of India, the Congress has nevertheless delivered her from the British domination and has taken over the largest part from them. Therefore, a swadeshi Government will henceforth function under a flag, under which the Congress has fought without violence many a battle against the British power. I see nothing to gloat over in this display of the flag. The joy and the excitement that accompany the stages in the ascent of the Himalayas, giving one a variegated and picturesque view, are not to be enjoyed on reaching the top. That no one has yet succeeded in making that goal, merely illustrates the truth that the goal is ever in sight, but never reached and the joy consists in the attempt.

"On the 13th day of April, 1921, I wrote an article for *Young India* which I re-read today before writing this article. I advise every reader to glance through that article. The improved condition of the flag has value only if it answers the significance attached to the original. If it does not, it is valueless in my estimation. There is reason for this caution.

"Some have said that the original flag has vanished for ever. A new generation has begun and with it have come new and befitting conceptions. I have not yet known a worthy son for whom age has disfigured his mother. It is conceivably possible to gild pure gold, but the son is yet to be born who would embellish his parent. Hence, in my opinion, nothing would have been lost, if our councillors had never thought of interfering with the design of the original flag. But in defence of the improvement, some say that 'the spinning wheel was an old woman's solace and Gandhi's toy; but swaraj does not belong to the old women. It belongs to the warriors and, therefore, we want Asoka's disc, mounted with lions, and, if the lions do not adorn the disc of the flag, the omission is merely for the sake of art;

they cannot be accommodated on it, but we will not be satisfied, until they have found a place on the disc somewhere. We have had enough of cowardliness. Nobody has yet had the experience of the non-violence of the brave. We shall talk about it, when we see it. This we know that only the lion is the undisputed king of forest life. Sheep and goats are his food. We are tired of wearing khadi in this age of advance. We have beautiful cloth made of glass. Our forefathers, used cloth, as a protection against wind and rain. Now we use cloth as ornamentation; therefore, it should be so transparent, as to show to advantage every limb of the body. Then the improved flag has no need of khadi. We do not want to disfigure with khadi the shop windows of our towns. Surely, it should be counted as creditable for us, when we do not regard it criminal for the villagers to wear khadi and for the old women to ply the spinning wheel in their humble cottages.'

"I would refuse to salute the flag that bears the foregoing interpretation, however artistic it may appear.

"Another group of interpreters says: The new flag is merely an improvement upon the original one. The spinning wheel has its undoubted honoured place on it. The wheel on the improved pattern, bereft of the spindle and the *mal*, may not be counted as a defect, if it is purely due to the exigencies of art. After all, every picture has to leave something for the imagination. The spinning wheel in a picture has no slivers with the spinners at work on it. These are left for the imagination to fill in. And this rule applies as well to the improved edition of the original flag. Thus conceived, the improvement must appear purely innocent to an unbiased mind. This tricolour flag with the wheel will certainly consist of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. Our country has called it khadi, whether it is woven from hand-spun cotton or silk. When the original conception is kept intact, no one has the right to cavil at a touch of art. We must not be deliberately inartistic. When the country was at war with a foreign power, the fact of being so engaged was in itself a work of art. Now that it has ended in success, there must be place for art, though, perhaps, of a lower type, yet quite useful, in order to perpetuate the memory of valour, such as is open to a weak nation. If any further, but not inconsistent, interpretations are added to this indispensable interpretation, then the additions will certainly be harmless. It is undoubtedly open to a rich mind to see in the same

colours a subtle meaning. The unity of design lies in the diversity of colours in the whole universe. Some will recall through the wheel the name of that Prince of Peace, Asoka, the founder of an empire, who ultimately gave up the pomp and the circumstance of power to become the undisputed emperor of the hearts of men, and became the representative of all the then known faiths. We would call it a legitimate interpretation of the wheel to seek in it the Wheel of Law ascribed to that living store of mercy and love.

"The spinning wheel, thus interpreted, adds to its importance in the life of billions of mankind. To liken it to and to derive it from the Asoka disc is to recognize in the insignificant-looking charkha the necessity of obeying the ever-moving wheel of the Divine Law of Love."

On July 24, Gandhi said at the prayer meeting that the A.-I.S.A. had stocked the national flags worth about two lakhs of rupees. They wanted to know what was to happen to those flags, in view of the new national flag. He asserted that the A.-I.S.A. was an organization for the service of the poor. It could ill afford to lose property worth about two lakhs. The Congress and the Constituent Assembly could never do anything, which could involve a poor man's organization in such needless loss. The new national flag was in implication the same as the existing tricolour flag with the charkha. So far as he knew, for the sake of the exigencies of design, the wheel was kept without the *mal* and the spindle. He had made inquiries and was told that the new flag would fly on the Government buildings and on our shops and embassies abroad. But the people could fly the old tricolour flag, without any hesitation or hindrance. When the King died, it was said, "The King is dead, long live the King." The kingship continued. The coins had the impression of the successor king. The old coins, however, bore the same value and they were as current as the new ones. The same held true about the existing tricolour flag. Only the Charkha Sangha branches should now no more manufacture flags with the old design.

A friend had written and asked him, if the Congress would continue to exist after August 15, and, if so, what would be its function and objective. The speaker replied that the objective of the Congress had so far been the attainment of India's independence through legitimate and peaceful means, or in his language, through truth and non-violence. As he had said already, there had been neither truth

nor non-violence in their hearts. He had, however, no doubt that the Congress had to remain even after August 15, though the objective must be altered. It was now a question of mutual strife, or mutual friendship. Today, they were cutting one another's throats and they were preparing for further slaughter. If such a fight came, it would be worse than during the Mutiny of 1857. In 1857, the masses of India were not awake. That was why he could not participate in the celebrations of August 15, whilst they were getting ready for a blood war among themselves. God forbid that such calamity befell India. If it did, their freedom would be shortlived. Russia, America and Britain and, perhaps, others also would soon step in and put an end to the newly acquired political freedom.

Dr. Sjahriar had come to India to seek the help of Pandit Nehru and Jinnah Saheb. He could only secure moral help, which was far superior to that of a legion of soldiers. But he could not secure it, if we were at war with one another. India's real contribution would be her moral weight on the side of justice.

India was the home of the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Christians and the others. The Parsis were driven out of Persia and found shelter in India. Here they were treated as equals. That was the tradition of India. She did not scorn or look down upon the new comers. She just absorbed them.

But, now, there seemed to be a quarrel about the national language. What was it to be? The speaker was told it was to be Hindi written in the Devanagari script. He could never agree to that. He had been twice president of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. He could not be an enemy of Hindi and Urdu. But he had realized that the language of the common people, the lingua franca of India, could only be an amalgamation of simple Hindi and simple Urdu, written in the Devanagari script or in the Urdu script, Hindustani. He knew many Hindus, leave alone the Muslims, who could not understand Sanskritized Hindi, nor could they write in the Devanagari script. Therefore, he would stick to Hindustani, even if he had to stand alone. The Muslims might regard themselves as the enemies of the Hindus today. India had to win the Muslims over, not by servility or appeasement, nor yet by enmity. They could do so only through friendship, non-violence of the brave. He could never teach cowardice. He was a staunch Hindu, but his Hinduism taught him equal regard for all religions.

A friend had written to him to say that now that India had been divided, she could not enjoy the status of a great nation in the world. The speaker did not agree with this opinion, if the two parts behaved as brothers and friends.

In his prayer speech of July 25, Gandhi said that Rajendra Babu had told him that he had received about 50,000 postcards, 30,000 letters and thousands of telegrams, asking for the prohibition of cow slaughter in the Union of India. A telegram was received today saying that a pundit had already undertaken a fast in Cawnpore on that issue. The Hindu religion prohibited cow slaughter for the Hindus, not for the world. Religious prohibition came from within. Any imposition from without meant compulsion. Such compulsion was repugnant to religion. India was the land not only of the Hindus but also of the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Christians and the Jews and all who claimed to be of India and were loyal to the Union. If they could prohibit the cow slaughter in India on the religious grounds, why could not the Pakistan Government prohibit, say, the idol worship in Pakistan on similar grounds? He was not a temple-goer, but if he was prohibited from going to a temple in Pakistan, he would make it a point to go there, even at the risk of losing his head. Just as the Shariat could not be imposed on the non-Muslims, the Hindu law could not be imposed on the non-Hindus. He told the audience that many Hindus were guilty of cow slaughter by slow torture. It was the Hindus who exported the cows outside India, well knowing that they were to be slaughtered for beef extract, which came to India and which the children of the orthodox Hindus ate without compunction under medical advice. Were they not the co-partners in cow slaughter?

He next referred to the Tree Plantation Week in Delhi. Many big people took part in it including Lady Mountbatten, the Vicereine. He was told that none but she had thought of watering the trees after planting. The official who originated the idea of tree-planting did not do it for fancy, nor was it meant only for the monied men. It began with them, so that the others would copy them and thus add to the wealth and the rainfall of India. Deforestation led to diminished rainfall. Moreover, trees required little care except in the early stages. An acre of land used for growing fruit trees would give greater yield than a crop of wheat over the same area. They should also take to growing salad vegetables in pots on their open terraces.

Love of growing edibles on open patches of ground, or in pots, provided healthy employment combined with innocent amusement.

The question he had no time to answer on the previous day, he answered on July 25. How were they to behave towards the Muslims in the Union, in view of the atrocities committed by them in many places? It had become difficult to trust the Muslims they had met and how were they to ensure the protection of the non-Muslims in Pakistan? He had dealt with the question more than once. Yet the answer evidently bore repetition. India was equally the home of the Hindus and non-Hindus. All religions were on their trial. He had already confessed his mistake. He had imagined that the weak could be non-violent. It was not so. If they could shed their cowardice, the Muslims would recognize their bravery and cease to worry them. In the Indian Union, they were bound to treat all with equal regard. In the absence of that bravery, which non-violence alone gave, they had the law of revenge—the division of the army might well mean a graphic lesson in that law. The division rendered the army weak, if not useless, as an effective defence against foreign aggression. He had shown how, if they did not take care, India might even have to pass through military dictatorship. Was it to be the fate of India to win freedom with one hand and lose it with the other? The Dutch seemed to be trying to deprive Indonesia of her freedom. Whatever their previous faults, the British were leaving India of their own accord. A fratricidal war was bound to result in the loss of that freedom. If they acted correctly in the Indian Union, no one would dare touch the non-Muslims in Pakistan, however small their number might be. It was, therefore, a good sign that the leaders of both the communities had made a statement that they would accept the decision of the Boundary Commission, whatever it was. They had also said that minorities and even erstwhile political opponents would be quite safe in either part of India. Correct conduct required that they should believe what they had said, till proved otherwise.

Speaking after the prayers on July 26, Gandhi said that from what he had heard and read in the newspapers it seemed that the strikes were becoming a nuisance in India. At Calcutta, there was a "Pens Down" strike in the Accountant-General's Office. Services like this were public utility services. The dislocation of these would dislocate the public life. He was not the one to tell the clerks and the others in these departments to slave away under any conditions. But there

were other and unobjectionable ways of getting a redress. The Pay Commission had recommended a large increase in the salaries of the lower staff. But they wanted more. That seemed to be the cause of the strike. Why should the director get, say, Rs. 2,000 a month, and the *chaprasi* Rs. 20 a month? It certainly sounded odd. He for one believed that, under ideal conditions, the barrister and the bhangi should both get the same payment. But he knew, as everybody else did know, that society all the world over was far from the ideal. It was not possible to pay everyone Rs. 100 per day. He knew too that the barrister did not deserve what he got. But the clients gladly paid four rupees a day to a tailor, but not more than eight annas per day to a sweeper. Society needed patient and sustained education to bring it to the same level in earning. It required much advanced training to reach that state of equality. In the meanwhile, every effort must be made to bridge the gulf between the payments of the higher and the lower ranks. The Pay Commission had done that. If it was not a satisfactory rise, the causes must be examined. Among these must be the capacity of the country to bear the additional burden. There was no such thing as an abrupt ascent in life. Let them not kill the goose that laid the golden egg. That process would spell insolvency of the land.

In Bombay, he had learnt, the Government had already put into practice the recommendations of the Pay Commission. But there was an agitation for a still higher increase. There was now a threat of a token strike of a day. He hoped that there was no truth in the statement. If there was, he hoped that the matter would not be allowed to go beyond a threat. If it was meant seriously, he would ask the leaders of the movement to think twice before embarking upon what appeared to him to be a meaningless adventure, unless it was an attempt to test the strength or the influence of the leaders behind the movement. If such was the case, he could only regard it as a dangerous move, harmful to the country. Let all who had influence in life remember that any manoeuvring for party gains might endanger the freedom they were about to gain from foreign domination.

The next day, he referred to the conference of the princes called on July 25 by the Viceroy. It was right that the Viceroy should now explain to the rulers what their position was going to be. He expressed the opinion that what the Viceroy had said in the main appeared to be correct. It was well known that up till now the princes had lived

secure under the shelter of British guns. Britain was the paramount power and had concluded the treaties with some of the princes. The latter had to do the bidding of the paramount power and they could not even appoint their own dewans. But paramountcy was now going and while the Viceroy said that, legally and technically, the states were independent, because that paramountcy was not devolving on either of the dominions, he advised the rulers to join one or other dominion, rather than be in isolation. It was ridiculous for them to remain aloof and to maintain their independent existence. The British could not compel them to join one or other dominion. The days of British compulsion were gone for ever. But, as the Viceroy said, it would be wisdom for the princes to make their own choice and enter one or the other dominion, having due regard to their geographical situation and the compulsion of that position.

There was one lacuna in the Viceroy's speech which, perhaps, was inevitable, but which the speaker thought, he had a right to refer to. He was from a small Kathiawad state himself. He knew what that position meant. There was no mention of the people of the states. The British had occasionally hauled a prince over the coals for misgovernance. But, by and large, the princes had lived the lives of ease and luxury and had exploited their subjects. Now that the imperial power was going, the princes would naturally welcome its departure in the sense that the weight of paramountcy was to be withdrawn. In another sense, they might foolishly resent the paramountcy of the ryots. He suggested to them that they should regard people's paramountcy as a privilege to be prized. That would add to their moral weight and redound to their credit. But this meant that they should become truly the first servants of the people. They had to show the spirit of service in action, they should act on the advice of Praja Mandals or the real leaders of the people. That would be wisdom and in that way alone could the states people feel with the rest of India the glow of freedom.

The Praja Mandals had no experience of running the government. But the same was true of the leaders, who were running the Government. They were lions outside. In office, they had become lambs. They were slaving away night and day, in order to serve the people. Therefore, the Praja Mandals were to be approached with trust.

The princes were on their trial. The taxes they received should be spent for the welfare of the subjects, so that they received tenfold

return for what they paid. People of the states comprised probably one-fourth of the whole of India. Would the ten crores of the states' subjects be able to rejoice on the 15th of August?

A simple Muslim girl had written to him: "Freedom has come. But shall I call it freedom or ruination?" There was force in what she had said. The British could have said that paramountcy would devolve on the dominions and they could have adjudicated, as to which dominion each state was to join. Unfortunately, they did not choose to do so. Nevertheless, the princes' road was quite clear. He hoped that they would choose the right course forthwith and assist in making the whole of India, though in two parts, a true democracy. There should be no mental reservations. All the parties must lay all their cards on the table. It was now easy to understand why they could have no demonstrative celebration. He recommended, therefore, the celebration of the event with fasting and prayer, and deep heart-searching.

On July 28, he said that, that evening, he proposed to answer some of the questions that were found in his correspondence file.

Question: "After 15th of August, will there be two Congresses or only one for both the parts of India, if there is to be any need for the Congress at all?"

Answer: "In my opinion, the need for such an organization will be greater than it has been upto now. No doubt, the function will be different. Unless Congressmen foolishly subscribe to the theory of two nations, based on two religions, there can be only one Congress for one India. The division of India does not, ought not to, divide the all-India body. India does not become two nations, because she has been cut up into two sovereign states. Supposing one or more states remain outside the two dominions, will the Congress exclude them and their people from National Congress? Will they not rather demand special care and attention from the Congress? Problems more intricate than before, will certainly arise. Some of them may defy solution. That will be no reason for cutting the Congress in twain. It will evoke greater statesmanship, deeper thinking and cooler judgement than hitherto. Let us not anticipate the paralysing difficulties. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Question: "Will the Congress become a communal body? There is an insistent demand for it. Now that the Muslims regard themselves as aliens, why should we not call the Union, Hindu India?"

Answer: "This question betrays gross ignorance. The Congress can never become a Hindu body. Those who will make it so, are enemies of India and Hinduism. We are a nation of millions. Their voice, no one has heard. Insistence, if there is any, is confined to the busy bodies of our cities. Let us not mistake their voice for the voice of the millions of India's villages. Thirdly, the Muslims of the Union have not declared themselves as aliens. Lastly, in spite of the many shortcomings of the Hindus, it can be safely claimed that Hinduism has never been known to be exclusive. Many persons claiming different faiths make us one and an indivisible nation. All these have an equal claim to be the nationals of India. The so-called majority community has no right to impose itself on the others. The might of numbers or of the sword shall not be right. Right is the only true might, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding."

Question: "What should be the attitude of the non-Muslims towards the Pakistan flag?"

Answer: "Pakistan flag has not yet come into being. Probably, it will be the same as the Muslim League flag. If it is identified with Islam, it must have a flag which is common to all the Muslims of the world and it should command the universal respect of all, who are not inimical to Islam. I know of no such flag either for Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, or any other faith. Not being a student of history, I am subject to correction. If the Pakistan flag, whatever its design, represents all its inhabitants equally, irrespective of religion, it will command my salute, as it should yours. In other words, the dominions must not be enemies, one of the other. The dominions of the Commonwealth cannot be enemies of one another. I am watching with painful interest how the South Africa Dominion behaves towards the Dominions of India. Can they afford to be anti-Indian? May the Europeans of that dominion refuse even to travel in the same compartment with the Indians, because they are Indians?"

On July 29, Gandhi told the prayer audience that he was leaving for Kashmir the next day. Talk of his going to Kashmir had been going on for a considerable time. He was not very keen to go there, although everyone should wish to visit that beautiful place. He was going as a matter of duty, in order to fulfil the promise made to Jawaharlal Nehru.

After his return to India from South Africa in 1915, he met the late Maharaja of Kashmir at the Kumbha Mela at Hardwar. The

maharaja invited him to visit Kashmir. But he had no time then. In 1938, he was the guest of Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan at Abbottabad. Sir N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar was then the Prime Minister of Kashmir. He had invited the speaker to go to Kashmir. It was almost decided that he would go. But he could not. In 1945 there was the Simla Conference. Important negotiations were going on at Delhi, in which Jawaharlal was the chief participant. He went on what was to be a day's visit to Kashmir. But being a born fighter Jawaharlal got caught in a fight with the state authorities and could not return. The Maulana Saheb was the President of the Congress. He was upset and so was Lord Wavell that Jawaharlal was held up. The speaker told the Maulana Saheb to send a telegram to Jawaharlal to return immediately. His commitment would be taken up by the Congress and that, if need be, the speaker would go instead. As a disciplined soldier that he was, Jawaharlal returned. When, therefore, over a month ago, Jawaharlal Nehru felt that he should pay a flying visit to Kashmir, the speaker offered to go in his place, provided the Viceroy had no objection to it. The Viceroy advised him to postpone his visit. After the protracted delay, it became a question as to who should go now. It was felt that Jawaharlal's visit would be more open to misinterpretation than his. As a matter of fact, neither had any intention of influencing the decision, as to joining one dominion or the other. And so far as he was concerned, he knew what Jawaharlal wanted to go for. He did not want to let the workers in Kashmir feel that they were neglected. Jawaharlal belonged to Kashmir. The speaker was connected with Kashmir as President of the A.-I.S.A. He was not going to Kashmir to secure Sheikh Abdullah's release. He was surely going to see Begum Abdullah. He had no wish to see the Kashmir functionaries, although he was courteous enough not to object to any such proposal. He would certainly like to see common men and women of Kashmir, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. So far as the accession to the dominions was concerned, he was firmly of opinion, that it was the ryots who should decide, not the rulers. British Government were a paramountcy imposed. The real paramountcy was inherently vested in the ryots. His visit to Kashmir was thus in fulfilment of the promise referred to by him. He had no wish to address public meetings.

He was taken to task for advising the people to fast and pray and spin on August 15th. Was it not a sign of mourning? It was not so.

There was cause for sorrow, inasmuch as the country had been cut in twain. But there was cause also for rejoicing, in that the British power was quitting India. There was more than enough to chasten them. Even when there was cause for unmixed joy, as on the 6th of April, 1919, when there was countrywide awakening and the Hindus, the Muslims and the others freely mixed with one another, he had advised the celebration by prayer and fasting and spinning. The reason for humbling themselves before God was now infinitely greater when brother was fighting brother, when there was shortage of food and of clothing, and when the country's leaders were called upon to shoulder a burden under which, without God's grace, the strongest back might well break.

Some were even thinking of having black-flag demonstrations. He could not approve of such. There was no cause for mourning.

Gandhi reached Srinagar on August 1, and left it on the morning of the 4th. During his stay, every minute was booked up. All kinds of people who came to see him were unanimous in asking for the release of Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders, and for the removal of the Prime Minister of Kashmir. He told them that he had not come on a political mission. He had no intention to ask for the release of Sheikh Abdullah. A satyagrahi's mere stay in jail was a most potent force to achieve the objective.

At Jammu, on August 4, deputations of the workers and students waited on him. "India will be free on August 15," they said. "What of Kashmir?" "That will depend on the people of Kashmir," he replied. What could the people do when Sheikh Abdullah was behind the bars? they asked. He discouraged the tendency to rely on one man and feel helpless in his absence. They must learn to stand on their own legs. The leader's function was merely to help them in that. Spoon-feeding could not go on for ever.

They all wanted to know whether Kashmir would join the Union or Pakistan. He had not gone to Kashmir to discuss this question, he said. It should be decided by the will of the Kashmiris.

Gandhi had promised himself that he would make no speeches in Kashmir, so as to make his visit devoid of all political colour, as far as was possible. On the first day, even the public prayer was not held. But the authorities wrote saying that they had no objection to the prayers being held in the compound of the house where he was staying. So the prayer was held and was attended by thousands on

the 2nd. Men and women flocked from the neighbouring villages to have a glimpse of the Mahatma.

His heart was with the sufferers of the Punjab. Therefore, he cut short his stay in Kashmir and returned to Jammu on the 4th, from where he motored down all the way back to Pindi, so as to spend some time with the refugees at the Wah camp. The number of the refugees in this camp had reached 24,000 at one stage. But the fear of the coming 15th of August was fast driving them out of the West Punjab. They numbered about 9,000 on the day of Gandhi's visit. They were all insistent that their camp should be removed to East Punjab before the 15th. They were terror-stricken. The things that they had seen and passed through were too terrible to face again. They could not trust the Muslims. If left in West Punjab, they would have no alternative, except to embrace Islam or to die, they said.

Addressing the prayer gathering at Wah on August 5, he said that he was glad to be able to visit the refugee camp. He was glad too that he was able to pay what was his second visit to Panja Saheb, the famous gurudwara. He had a talk with the refugees.

Before, however, he dealt with matters arising out of these talks with the representatives of the refugees, he said that he would like to say a word about his Kashmir visit. He had made up his mind not to hold any public meeting or address them, but he was able to see the workers. Begum Saheba, wife of Sheikh Abdullah, was with him throughout the three days he was in Srinagar. He was able to see also the Maharaja Saheb, the Maharani Saheba and the Prime Minister, Kak Saheb. He was sorry that he was not able to meet Sheikh Abdullah who was undoubtedly the leader of the Kashmiris. He had not gone there to see the Sheikh Saheb. He was able, however, to hold public prayers for two days in Kashmir and one day in Jammu. These were attended by thousands. He could say that on August 15, all being well, legally the State of Kashmir and Jammu would be independent. But he was sure that the state would not remain in that condition for long after August 15. It had to join either the Union or Pakistan. It had a predominantly Muslim population. But he saw that Sheikh Saheb had fired the Kashmiris with local patriotism. British paramountcy would terminate on the 15th. The real paramountcy would then commence. He referred to the paramountcy of Kashmiris. They had one language, one culture and, so far as he could see, they were one people. He could not distinguish

readily between a Kashmiri Hindu and a Kashmiri Muslim. In the large deputation that he saw, it was very difficult for him to know whether it was predominantly Muslim or Hindu. Whatever it was, he had no hesitation in saying that the will of the Kashmiris was the supreme law in Kashmir and Jammu. He was glad to say that the maharaja and maharani readily acknowledged the fact. He had the good fortune to read what was euphemistically called the Treaty of Amritsar, but which was in reality a deed of sale. He supposed that it would be dead on the 15th August. The seller was the then British Governor-General, and Maharaja Gulab Singh was the buyer. The treaty going, would the state revert to the British and, therefore, to England? If to India, to which part? He held that without going into the intricacies of law, which he had no right to dilate upon, the common sense dictated that the will of the Kashmiris should decide the fate of Kashmir and Jammu. The sooner it was done, the better. How the will of the people would be determined was a fair question. He hoped that the question would be decided between the two dominions, the maharaja and the Kashmiris. If the four could come to a joint decision, then much trouble would be avoided. After all, Kashmir was a big state, it had the greatest strategic value, perhaps, in all India. So much for Kashmir.

He then dealt with the question of the refugees at Wah. Among them they were nearly 9,000. The Hindus and Sikhs, who discussed the question with him, said that they were afraid of the approach of August 15th. He confessed that he did not in any way whatsoever share their fear. Nor could he appreciate it. The Muslims had got their Pakistan. They could now have no quarrel with the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Punjab. Jinnah Saheb and the other Muslim Leaguers had given assurances that the non-Muslims were as safe in Pakistan as the Muslims. He invited them to accept the assurance. Supposing that the assurance proved untrue and the worst fears of the refugees proved true, it would be the beginning of the ruin of Islam. He refused to believe that Muslim leaders would be guilty of such a suicidal act. He asked the refugees, men and women, to dispel all fear. If he could put off his departure for Noakhali, he would gladly pass August 15th in the midst of the refugees at Wah. He proposed, however, to do the next best thing. They saw Dr. Sushila Nayyar taking notes of what he was saying. She herself belonged to Gujrat a district in West Pakistan. He had conferred with her before

coming to the meeting, and though she was otherwise to accompany him to Noakhali, she had accepted his advice to stay with refugees on his behalf, in order to help them to dispel all fear about August 15. He knew that she had no such fear. She was with him in Noakhali, as was also her brother Pyarelal. She was posted in one of the worst affected areas of Noakhali and, through medical assistance, she had become popular among the Muslims, as she was undoubtedly among the Hindus. He had just heard from the district commissioner, who was a Muslim, that the refugees in and about Rawalpindi had nothing to fear. They should feel as safe, as the Muslim inhabitants.

At Panja Saheb, an address was presented to him in Gurumukhi. It stressed the sufferings of the Sikh community and dangers that faced them and their shrines in Pakistan. Twice the gurudwara was attacked by the Muslim mob during the recent disturbances. The attack was warded off and no harm came to the gurudwara. They wanted now definite and concrete measures to ensure the safety of the gurudwara. They also wanted East Punjab to be made into a Sikh state where Sikh religion and culture would prosper.

Replying to the address, he stated that he did not consider it possible that East Punjab should be handed over entirely to the Sikhs to govern. He felt that the Sikhs should never entertain such an unworthy ambition. They were reputed, and rightly so, to be a warlike race. With them, of all persons in the world, merit and merit alone should be the sole test for holding any office.

As to the protection of Panja Saheb, Nankana Saheb and other gurudwaras that may be found in Pakistan or elsewhere, he said:

"Do not look to any other power outside yourselves for the protection of these shrines. I would like every Sikh to be a defender of his faith and, therefore, of all gurudwaras and not merely of Panja Saheb, which is one of the greatest. At the same time, I want you to shed all fear about the future. I would request you to rely upon the plighted word of Muslim leaders. They had got their Pakistan. They have no quarrel now with any one in India, at least they should have none. If your fears materialize and any attempt at desecration of the gurudwaras is made by the Muslims, it will be contrary to the tradition of Islam, as I know it. And those Muslims, who take part in such desecration, would be the partakers in the destruction of Islam. Every faith is on its trial in India. God is the infallible judge and the world which is His creation will judge the Muslim leaders not

according to their pledges and promises, but according to the deeds of these leaders and their followers. What I have said of the Muslim leaders is also true of the leaders and followers of other faiths.

"The rest of my life is going to be spent in East Bengal or West Punjab, perhaps, the Frontier Province," said Gandhi in Lahore on August 6, in reply to a question put by Congress workers.

Replying to a question by Dr. Lehna Singh, he said that if the Pakistan flag was such as would ensure equal rights and full protection to the minorities, they should accept and honour the flag and have absolutely no hesitation in saluting it. "I would ask you not to disown the Pakistan flag merely on the ground that it bears the crescent. I must, however, say that if no assurance of the kind I have mentioned is forthcoming, at least, I shall refuse to salute that flag."

About the Indian flag, he said: "I must say that if the flag of the Indian Union will not contain the emblem of the charkha, I will refuse to salute that flag. The national flag of India was first thought of by me and I cannot conceive of India's national flag without the emblem of the charkha. We have, however, been told by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and others that the sign of the wheel or *chakra* in the new national flag symbolizes the charkha also."

Referring to the Punjab, he observed: "My heart has always been with the Punjab, and the sad tales of woe and sufferings which I had been hearing have made me always think of the Punjab. Do not think that I had ever forgotten your province. I am fully aware of the suffering of the Punjab. I have been yearning to come to the Punjab, ever since I came to Delhi, but there were certain forces which were against my coming to this province. My present place is in Noakhali, and I would go there, even if I have to die. But as soon as I am free from Noakhali, I will come to the Punjab. I hope to be free from Noakhali very soon."

Under A Muslim Roof

1947

ON HIS way to Calcutta, on August 7, 1947, Gandhi wrote on the task before the students:

"There should be only one national organization, including the Hindus, the Muslims and the others. The students are the makers of the future. They cannot be partitioned. I am sorry to observe that neither the students have thought for themselves, nor the leaders have left them to their studies, so that they can become good citizens. The rot began with the alien government. We, the inheritors, have not taken the trouble to rectify the errors of the past. Then the different political groups have sought to catch the students, as if they were shoals of fish. And stupidly, the students have run into the net spread for them.

"It is, therefore, a Herculean task for any students' organization to undertake. But there must be a heroic spirit among them, who would not shrink from the task. The scope will be to knit them together into one. This the students cannot do, unless they will learn to steer clear of active politics. A student's duty is to study the various problems that require solution. His time for action comes, after he finishes his studies.

"They must eschew active politics. It is a sign of one-sided growth that all parties have made use of the student world for their purpose. This was probably inevitable, when the purpose of education was to create a race of slaves, who would hug their slavery. That part of the business is over, I hope. The students' first business is to think out the education that the children of a free nation should receive. The education of today is obviously not such. I must not go into the question, as to what it should be. Only they must not allow themselves to be deceived into the belief that it is the function only of the elders in the university senates. They must stimulate the faculty of thinking. I do not even remotely suggest that the students can

force the situation by the strikes and the like. They have to create the public opinion by offering constructive and enlightened criticism. The senators having been brought up in the old school are slow to move. They can truly be acted upon by enlightenment.

"A student's life has been rightly likened to the life of a sanyasi. He must be the embodiment of simple living and high thinking. He must be discipline incarnate. His pleasure is derived from his studies. They do provide the real pleasure, when study ceases to be a tax the student has to pay. What can be a greater pleasure than that a student marches from knowledge to more knowledge?"

After arriving in Calcutta, he underwent medical examination. In a bulletin, Dr. Sunil Bose stated that, in view of the rainy season and the fear of malaria in Noakhali district, it was essential to cut down his stay there to eight or ten days at the most. He added: "I have examined Mahatma Gandhi after an interval of eight years. His physical condition is unchanged, since 1939. In fact, the facial appearance and colour seem to have improved marvellously. Body weighs today 113 pounds, against 112 to 114 pounds in 1939. Heart and lungs are sound. The pulse rate is 68 per minute and regular, volume good. The general outlook in health is on the whole very favourable."

At Sodepur, on August 9, Gandhi devoted his prayer address to the situation in Calcutta. His destination, he said, was Noakhali, but he had been listening the whole day long to the woes of Calcutta. Muslim friends and also some Hindus complained that the Hindus seemed to have gone mad, not that the Muslims had become wiser. But now that the Muslim police and officials were almost withdrawn and replaced by Hindus, the Hindus had begun to believe that they were now free to do what they liked, as the Muslims were reported to have done under the Muslim League ministry. He was not going to examine what was done under the League ministry. His purpose was undoubtedly to know what his co-worker Dr. Ghosh's ministry now was doing. Was it true that the Muslims were living in terror? And if it was at all true, it was a severe reflection on the Congress ministry. He was rightly asked, before he went up to Noakhali, to tarry in Calcutta to "pour a pot of water over the raging fire" that was burning Calcutta. He would love to give his life, if, thereby, he could contribute to the quenching of mob fury. He would never be able to subscribe to the theory that the doings in Calcutta were

the result of goondaism. He held that the crude open goondaism was a reflection of the subtle goondaism they were harbouring within. Hence, it was the duty of the Governments to hold themselves responsible for the acts of goondas, so called. He hoped that Calcutta would not present the disgraceful spectacle of the hot goondaism, when they were entering upon full responsibility.

On August 10, there was an enormous crowd to listen to Gandhi. Their acclamation was piercing. Gandhi had to speak to them for a few minutes to establish quiet. The audience responded splendidly and listened in perfect silence.

Gandhi said that he had thought that he was to go to Noakhali the next day, Monday. Owing to the pressure from many Muslim friends who had seen him, he had decided to stay to see, if he could contribute his share in the return of sanity in this premier city of India. The argument of the Muslim friends went home. He had, at the same time, said that if he did not go to Noakhali and any mishap took place, his life would become forfeit, as he had said already about Bihar. He had seen the ministers and the others too during the day. He would like to see the places, where the destruction was said to have been wrought by the Hindus. He had also learnt that there were parts of Calcutta which were inaccessible to the Hindus, though many premises therein used to be occupied by them. Similar was the case with some Hindu localities. His head hung in shame to listen to this recital of man's barbarism. He would love to go to these places and see for himself how much truth there was in these recitals. He was told that there were not more than twenty-three per cent Muslims in Calcutta. It was unthinkable that such a minority could coerce the majority without countenance from or incompetence of authority. Similarly, it was unthinkable that in the midst of a government, which knew the art of government, the majority could for one moment be permitted to coerce the minority. He was also told that what the Muslim police and Muslim officers were alleged to be doing before, now that the Congress ministry was in power, the Hindu police and Hindu officers were doing. They had become partial in their administration of justice. If this wretched spirit of communalism had entered the police force, the prospect was black, indeed. He hoped that the police would realize the dignity of their profession.

Addressing the prayer gathering on August 11, Gandhi said:

"This evening I must devote to answering questions addressed to me. One of them complains that prominent men were admitted but the comparatively unknown persons were insulted. There was an inordinate rush throughout the day, it being Sunday. I agree that when there is such a rush, there should be no distinction made between the known and the unknown persons. But I had given previous appointments to some who had to be admitted. And then there were many, who were specially working for the day. I would, therefore, plead with those, who may feel disappointed on such occasions, to have forbearance and patience, as I would plead with the volunteers to be uniformly courteous and gentle with the public.

"I had read something about the Chittagong flood, the day before yesterday, when I came to Calcutta. This is the third day and I see that the angry waters have not subsided, and the extent of loss to life and property no one can yet assess with any degree of accuracy. It is hardly necessary to remind ourselves, in the face of such catastrophe, that we may not think of East or West, or of Pakistan and Hindustan. Adversity makes strange bedfellows. Surely, then, those who were bedfellows till yesterday, must not cease to be at least on such occasions, whatever their political or religious differences might be or might have done. It is a calamity to cope with, not merely for East Bengal but for the whole of Bengal, and not for Bengal only but for the whole of India. There must be a strong and reliable committee to collect and distribute funds. Local men come first. Round them can arise an all-Bengal Relief Committee, and if need be an all-India one. No trouble need be given to all India, if Bengal alone can cope with the situation. My whole heart goes out to Chittagong in its dire calamity. May the survivors bear it with fortitude.

"Correspondents continue to ask all sorts of questions about the appointments of the governors, ministers and the like, as if I were a member of the Congress Working Committee, or could affect its decisions. I know and admit, that I have and shall always retain, by right of service, a place in the hearts of Congressmen. I know too that I shall forfeit that place, immediately I begin to overstep my limits. Legal status I have none, moral status can be retained, only so long as the moral platform is firmly held.

" 'Do you agree that the leaders of both the communities should go to East and West Bengal and show that they have no differences now to quarrel over?'

"My answer is emphatically 'Yes', if the leaders are one at heart. If the word belies the thought, the going about will be worse than useless. The newspaper war still continues. I would always prefer an open war to the war of hearts. Are we sure that the leaders trust one another? My fear is that neither at the top, nor at the bottom, are we cleansed of our hypocrisy. I can, therefore, but repeat my old argument, that we must unlearn the habit of retaliation in every shape and form. Blow for blow is a crude form and, probably, more excusable, than the subtle one of evil thought for its kind. Thought is the root of speech and deed. I am sorry that I am unable to return a more comfortable answer. There is none that I know. This is said to hearten ourselves, not to dishearten us. For, I have said the naked truth. Within my experience, it ever heartens. Is it not heartening to know the true remedy for a disease? Any other is a palliative and in the end, aggravates the disease."

On August 12, Gandhi said that the 15th was to be a landmark in India's history. It was a day, when India would be declared free of the foreign yoke. India was to be an independent nation. He had told how the day was to be observed, but he was probably alone in the view. Already, there was an announcement that the Muslims of Calcutta were to observe the day, as a day of mourning. He hoped that it was not true. No man could be compelled to observe the day in a particular manner. It was to be a perfectly voluntary act. He would ask his Muslim countrymen not to mourn over the freedom. The present distemper was to go.

What were the Hindus in Pakistan to do? They should salute the Pakistan flag, if it meant the freedom and equality of all in every respect, irrespective of caste, colour or creed.

He had heard further that on that day the Indians in the French and Portuguese possessions were to declare their freedom of France and Portugal, respectively. That, he stated, would be a thoughtless act. It would be a sign, perhaps, of arrogance. The British were retiring, not the French and the Portuguese. He, undoubtedly, held the view that the Indians in these possessions were bound to merge in independent India in good time. Only, the Indians in those territories should not take the law in their own hands. They had the constitutional means open to them, and then there was the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who had vindicated the freedom of Indonesia. Surely, he was not going to neglect his own kith and

kin in the two possessions. If they had any doubt about the validity of his advice, they should act on Jawaharlal's advice.

He then referred to another important subject. They knew that he prolonged his stay in Calcutta by two days at the instance of his Muslim friends. Last night Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy came to see him. He suggested that it would be contrary to the speaker's practice to leave Calcutta, while it was going through the horrors of the communal strife. Shaheed Saheb also suggested that he should prolong his stay in the city and work, until real peace was restored. The speaker suggested that Suhrawardy Saheb and he should live under the same roof in the disturbed parts of Calcutta. It would be best to live unprotected by the police, or the military. In brotherly fashion, they would approach the people, argue with them and tell them that now that the partition had taken place by agreement, there was no longer any reason why the two parties should quarrel. The decision of the Boundary Commission was going to be announced in a day or two, and it was in the fitness of things that all the parties should abide by the decision in a becoming manner. After all, the parties had appointed an arbitration tribunal. They were in honour bound to abide by the award, whatever it was.

His proposal to Suhrawardy Saheb was of such an important nature that he could not afford to give a hasty reply. The speaker had, therefore, asked him to consult his aged father, as well as his daughter, before coming to a decision.

During the afternoon, Mr. Osman, the ex-Mayor of Calcutta, had arrived with Mr. Suhrawardy's message, stating that the latter had accepted the speaker's proposal without any reservation. It was now time, therefore, for them to choose the quarters in the midst of the worst affected areas and see what could be done by joint effort.

Gandhi remarked that he was warned that Shaheed Saheb was not to be relied upon. The same thing was said about himself also. He was described as the worst enemy of Islam. He was supposed to be a consummate hypocrite. God alone knew men's hearts. He asserted that he spoke and acted, as he believed. He had known Suhrawardy Saheb since the days of Faridpore Political Conference, to which the late Deshbandhu had taken him. Nobody had any right to prejudge anybody. He would trust, as he expected to be trusted. Both would live under the same roof, and would have no secrets from each other. They would together see all the visitors. People should have

the courage to speak out the truth under all circumstances and in the presence of those against whom it had to be said.

In the afternoon of August 13, Gandhi arrived at a Muslim residence in Beliaghata. He was accompanied by Mr. S. M. Osman, the ex-Mayor and secretary of the Calcutta District Muslim League, and Mr. A. P. Choudhury, the Political Secretary to the Premier of West Bengal. Miss Manu Gandhi and Mrs. Ava Gandhi, who were to stay with him, also accompanied Gandhi.

Despite his refusal to have a police protection, the Government left nothing to chance and a picket was posted at the house.

The Chief Minister of West Bengal, Dr. P. C. Ghosh, told the press that although Gandhi had expressed the view that he wanted to stay in the disturbed area without military or police protection, the Government could not sit idle without arranging such protection. "If not for Gandhiji, we will have to do it for Mr. Suhrawardy," said Dr. Ghosh.

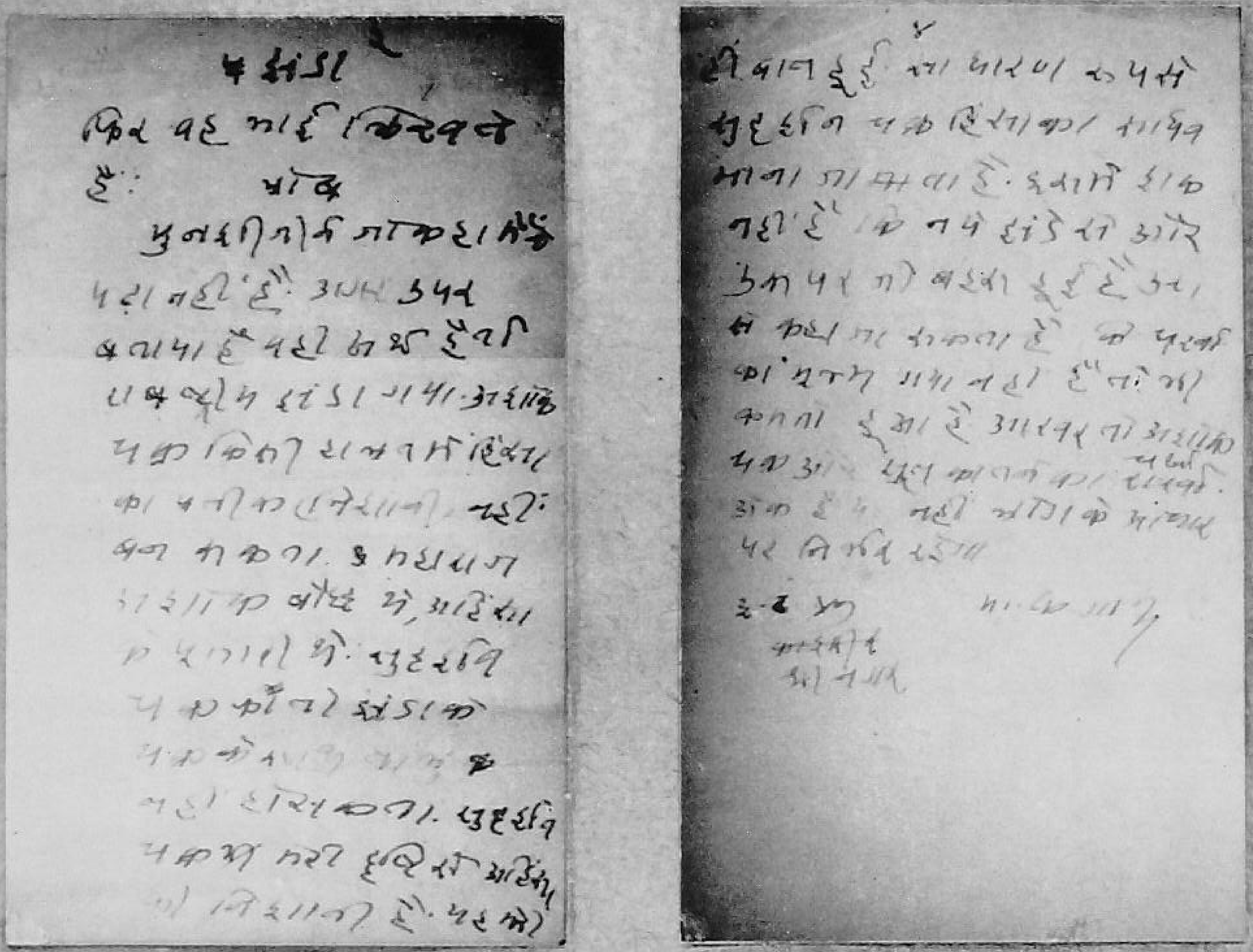
Beliaghata had been one of the most disturbed areas of the city. There had been many cases of bomb-throwing, use of fire-arms by private individuals, arson, looting and clashes between rival groups. It had a mixed population of Hindus and Muslims.

A short while after Gandhi had arrived at his new residence, persistent shouts of "Suhrawardy, go back!" were heard at the gate. The crowd had stopped the car by which Mr. Suhrawardy came. With the help of the police, the car entered the compound and he quietly came near the room where Gandhi had already settled down and was attending to his heavy correspondence. Unlacing the shoes which he left outside, Mr. Suhrawardy entered his room. Gandhi greeted him with a smile.

The demonstrators swelled in numbers. Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Gandhi's secretary, approached the crowd and requested them to maintain peace and to place before Gandhi their grievances. The angry demonstrators refused to hear his pleadings.

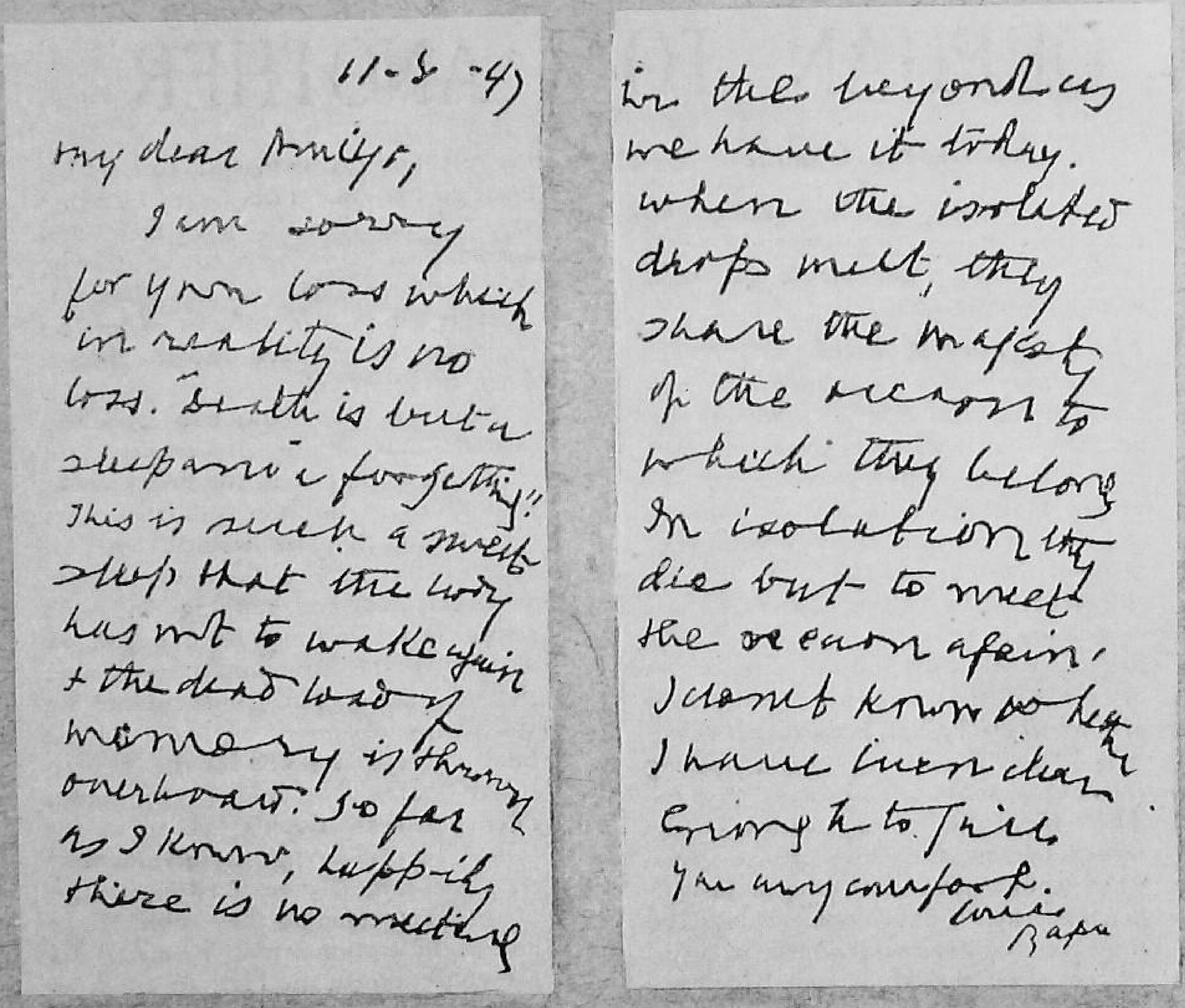
The young men who were excited volleyed Gandhi with questions, "Why did you not come to us when fire was raging in Hindu homes after August 16th last year?" "Why don't you go and settle down at Kolootola and Park Circus areas, where a large number of Hindu houses are lying vacant and ruined?"

He explained that they should remember that from August 16th last year up to that day, the whole political structure of India had



Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

Manuscript of Gandhi's article in Hindi on national flag, dated Srinagar, August 3, 1947



11-8-47

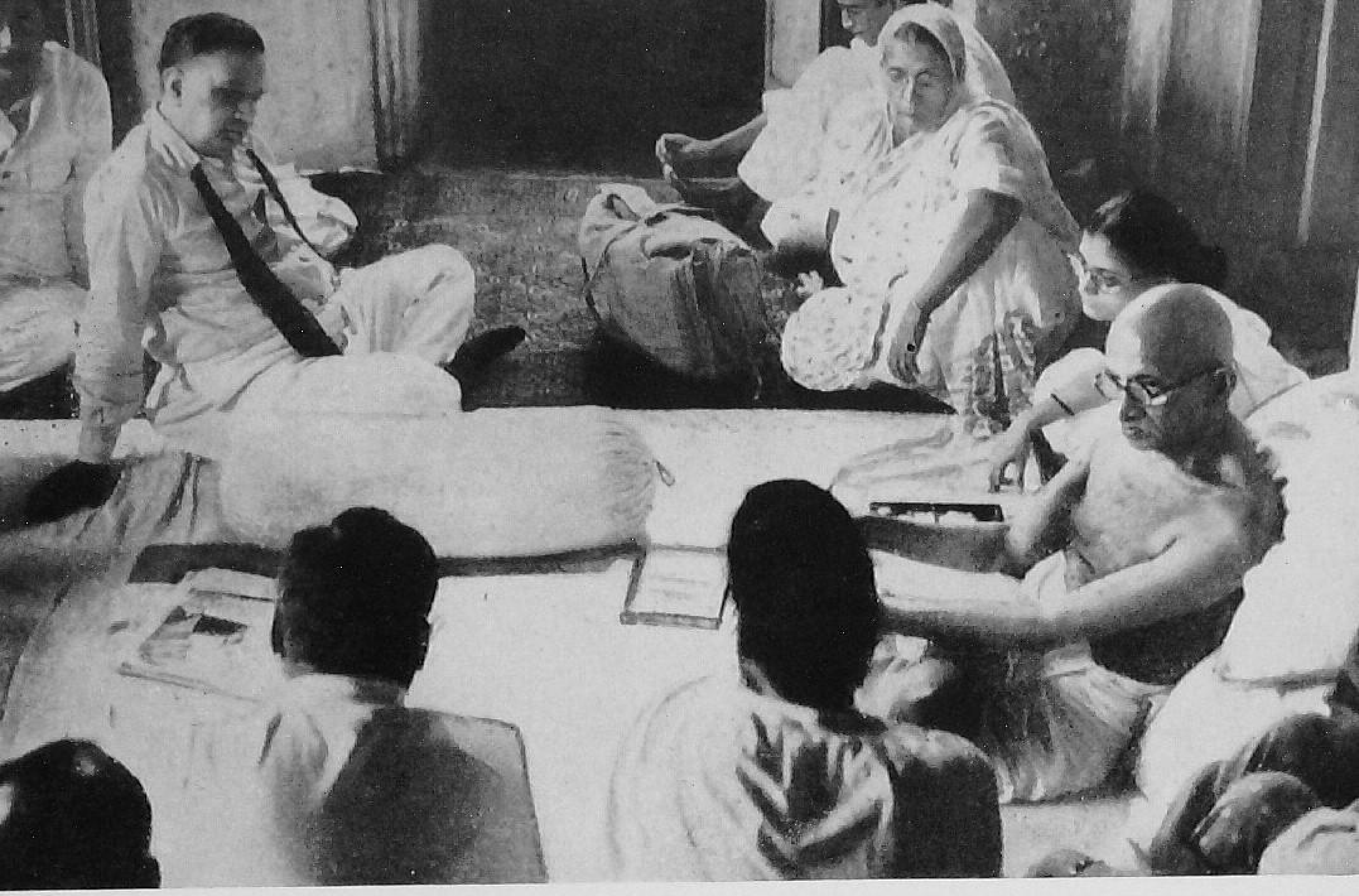
My dear Amiya,

I am sorry for your loss which in reality is no loss. "Death is but a sleep and a forgetting." This is such a sweet sleep that the body has not to wake again & the dead load of memory is thrown overboard. So far as I know, happily there is no meeting in the beyond as we have it today. When the isolated drops melt, they share the majesty of the ocean to which they belong. In isolation they die but to meet the ocean again. I don't know whether I have been clear enough to give you any comfort.

Love

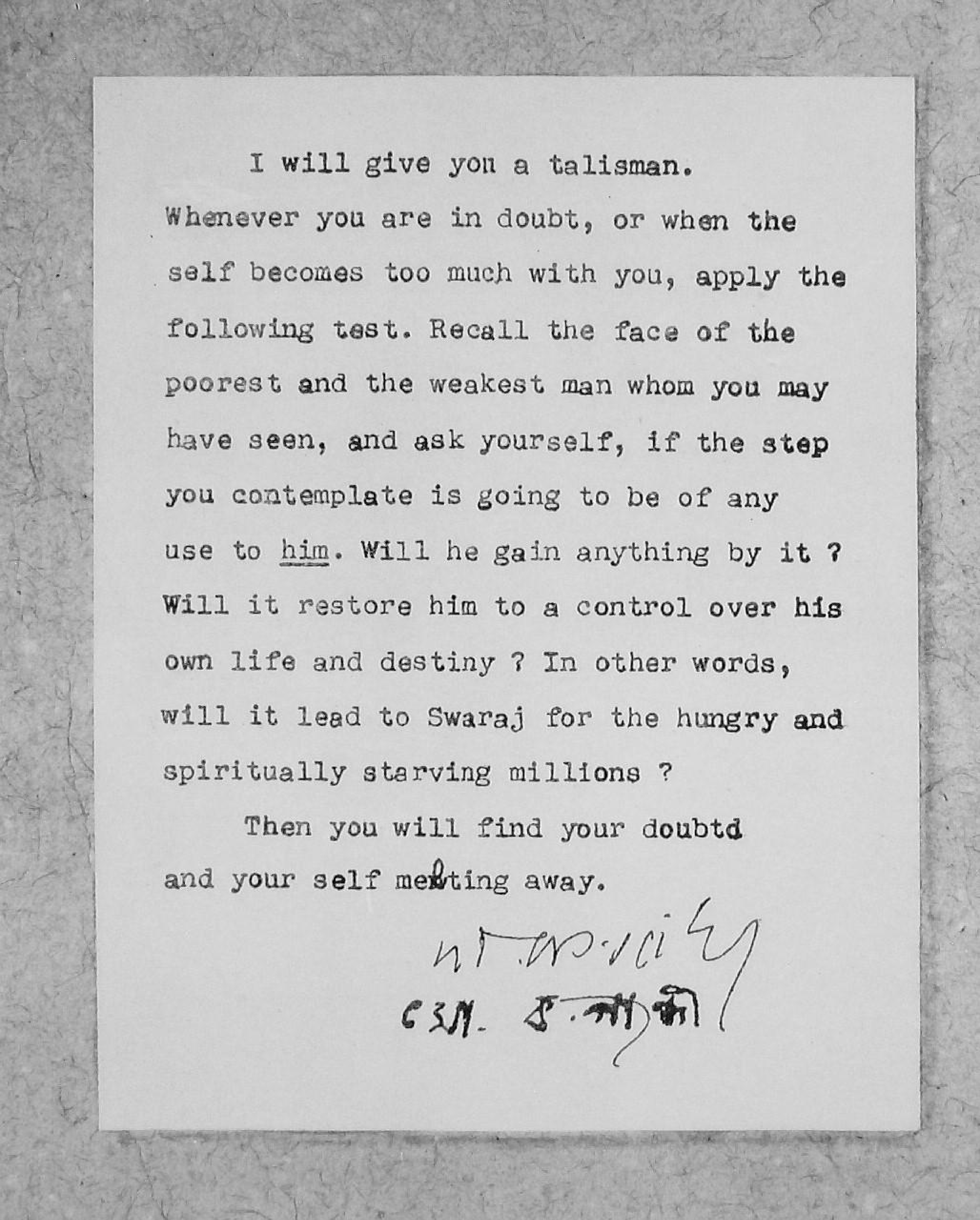
Bapu

Gandhi's letter to Prof. Amiya Chakravarty, dated August 11, 1947



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi with Shaheed Suhrawardy at Beliaghata residence in Calcutta, August 1947



I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to *him*. Will he gain anything by it ? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny ? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions ?

Then you will find your doubtd and your self melting away.

A talisman signed by Gandhi in Devanagari and Bengali scripts

changed. He was in Calcutta, only on his way to Noakhali, to be there, lest anything happened in that district. He had postponed his departure for Noakhali as Suhrawardy Saheb had flown from Delhi only to say that Calcutta was a raging fire and that he should pour a pot of water on it. He thought that by staying on in Calcutta, he could do a lot for the Hindus of Noakhali. He never was an enemy of the Hindus, but to him the Hindus and the Muslims were same, brothers, and so he wanted as much the Muslims to start living in their homes again, as the Hindus.

There was no incident in Calcutta on August 14. Calm prevailed around Gandhi's residence in marked contrast to the angry demonstrations on the previous day. Arrangements had been made to hold a public prayer in the evening in a near-by park. Mr. Suhrawardy, who was unable to stay with Gandhi the previous night for want of sleeping accommodation, returned there in the morning.

During his morning walk, Gandhi inspected some of the houses destroyed during the disturbances in the immediate neighbourhood of his residence.

Some parties of Hindus and Muslims went round the city, raising slogans of Hindu-Muslim unity, welcoming the new Dominions of India and Pakistan. There were scenes of Hindu-Muslim fraternization in some of the areas that were recently disturbed. Buses were plying along the routes which they had avoided for a considerable time. Gandhi drove round an area of Beliaghata in the evening to see for himself this picture of fraternization which was reported to him by a number of visitors.

On that day, Gandhi addressed a huge meeting at Beliaghata. The audience listened to him without the slightest disturbance. He said that the next day was the fixed day of deliverance from the foreign yoke. It was, therefore, a great day. They were bound to celebrate it. In his opinion, it was a day when both the Dominions were to shoulder a heavy burden. He invited everyone to have twenty-four hours' fast and prayer during the day, for the well-being of India as a whole and pass it in spinning, as much as possible. For, it was hand-spinning that had knit the poor and the rich together, and that had given occupation to countless men and women who were without occupation.

He then explained once more the reason for postponing his visit to Noakhali and coming to stay in the present place. He said that

Shaheed Saheb had come to see him and induce him to do his bit in bringing about peace in Calcutta which was burning. The appeal had its effect upon him. He agreed, provided Shaheed Saheb went with him to the affected areas and stayed there with him under the same roof, till the fury in Calcutta had abated and complete friendship between the two communities was restored. Therefore, they were to work with one mind without any mental reservation and without any secrets in the matter from one another. Shaheed Saheb took one night to confer with his aged father and his daughter, and sent over his decision the next day. And he sent one message which brought them to the present place yesterday. He had many warnings also against Shaheed Saheb. He was unaffected by these warnings. He was bound to believe his word, as he expected him to accept his word. Let them not think that they were to neglect those parts of Calcutta which were deserted by their Hindu inhabitants and were occupied by the Muslims. They were working for the peace of the whole of Calcutta and he invited his audience to believe with them that if Calcutta returned to sanity and real friendship, then Noakhali and the rest of India would be safe. He mentioned that Shaheed Saheb was in the building, but he had, with his consent, kept himself away from the meeting, as he wanted to avoid being the slightest cause of irritation to the meeting. But he was glad that the audience had exhibited becoming tolerance and they gave him the courage to bring Shaheed Saheb to the meeting. After all, they should live and work together in the open and perfect co-operation, if their difficult mission was to succeed.

Birth Of Free India

1947

On August 14, 1947, Dominion of Pakistan was heralded at Karachi. Jinnah assured that "the two Indias are parting as friends and will continue to be friends for ever".

At the other end, entire Delhi kept awake to witness the historic event of ushering in the freedom of India—now mutilated—at midnight. Unprecedented scenes of enthusiasm were witnessed, both inside and outside the Constituent Assembly chamber, where seething, swaying humanity wildly cheered the momentous event, heralded with blowing of conches and cries of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai".

Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, opening the proceedings, recalled in grateful remembrance the services and the sacrifices of those men and women, known and unknown, who with smiles on their faces walked to the gallows and faced the bullets. He paid tribute and reverence to "Mahatma Gandhi, who has been our beacon light, our guide and philosopher, during the last thirty years". He declared: "To all the minorities in India, we give the assurance that they will receive fair and just treatment and there will be no discrimination in any form against them."

"Long years ago, we had made a trust with destiny, and now the time comes, when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially," observed Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, moving a resolution, prescribing an oath for the members in the Constituent Assembly. At the hour of midnight, Nehru said:

"When the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment, we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity . . .

"At the dawn of history, India started on her unending quest and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her successes and her failures. Through good and ill fortune alike, she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which are her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?"

"Freedom and power bring responsibility. And that responsibility rests upon this assembly, a sovereign body, representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom, we have endured all the pains of labour, and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue ever now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now.

"The future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving, so that we might fulfil the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance, and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but so long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

"And so we have to labour and to work and work hard, to make our dreams real. These dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all nations and peoples are too closely knit together today, for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace has been said to be indivisible, so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this one world, that can no longer be split into isolated fragments."

Prior to the pledge-taking ceremony, which took place after midnight, Nehru moved the adoption of the text of the pledge in the shape of a motion, which read as follows:

"At this solemn moment, when people of India, through suffering and sacrifice, have secured freedom, I, a member of the Constituent Assembly of India do dedicate myself in all humility to the service of India and her people to the end that this ancient land attain her rightful place in the world and make her full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind."

The resolution was seconded and supported by the League Party leader Mr. Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman, and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The clock struck twelve and one member blew a conch, an ancient Hindu custom to herald an auspicious event. Some one shouted it was August 15th and more cheering followed.

The President then read the pledge, which was repeated by all the members, standing. He then proposed that "it should be intimated to the Viceroy that the Constituent Assembly of India has assumed power for the governance of India."

Then an announcement endorsing the recommendation that Lord Mountbatten be the Governor-General of India from August 15 was again greeted with loud cheers. The President announced that he and Nehru would proceed forthwith to Lord Mountbatten to convey to him the decision of the house.

In a stirring message to the nation, Jawaharlal Nehru said:

"The appointed day has come—the day appointed by destiny, and India stands forth again after long slumber and struggle, awake and vital, free and independent. The past clings on to us still in some measure and we have to do much, before we redeem the pledges we have so often taken. Yet the turning point is past, history begins anew for us, the history which we shall live and act, and the others will write about.

"It is a fateful moment for us in India, for all Asia, and for the world. A new star rises, the star of freedom in the East, a new hope comes into being, a vision long cherished materializes. May the star never set and that hope never be betrayed.

"We rejoice in that freedom, even though clouds surround us, and many of our people are sorrow-stricken and difficult problems encompass us. But freedom brings responsibilities and burdens and we have to face them in the spirit of a free and disciplined people.

"On this day, our first thoughts go to the architect of this freedom, Father of our Nation, who, embodying the old spirit of India, held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted up the darkness that surround us. We have often been unworthy followers of his and have strayed from his message, but not only we, but the succeeding generations, will remember this message and bear the imprint in their hearts of this great son of India, magnificent in his faith and strength, courage and humility. We shall never allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or stormy the tempest.

"Our next thoughts must be of unknown volunteers and soldiers of freedom, who, without praise or reward, have served India even unto death.

"We think also of our brothers and sisters, who have been cut off from us by political boundaries and who unhappily cannot share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us and will remain of us, whatever may happen, and we shall be sharers in their good and ill fortune alike.

"The future beckons to us. Whither do we go and what shall be our endeavour? To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India. To fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease. To build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions, which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman.

"We have hard work ahead. There is no resting for anyone of us till we redeem our pledge in full and till we make all the people of India, what the destiny intended them to be. We are citizens of a great country, on the verge of bold advance, and we have to live up to that high standard. All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India, with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great, whose people are narrow in thought or in action.

"To the nations and the peoples of the world, we send greetings and pledge ourselves to co-operate with them in furthering peace, freedom and democracy.

"And to India, our much-loved motherland, the ancient, eternal and ever-new, we pay our reverent homage and we bind ourselves afresh to her service. Jai Hind."

On the morning of August 15th, Lord Mountbatten declared in the Constituent Assembly: "I have the honour to be the Governor-General of independent India. I am your servant."

"At this historic hour," he added, "let us not forget all that India owes to Mahatma Gandhi, the architect of India's freedom through non-violence. We must miss his presence here today, and we would have him know how much he is in our thoughts."

Rajendra Prasad said: "Let us on this historic occasion pay our homage to the maker of our modern history, Mahatma Gandhi, who

has inspired us and has guided us through all these years of trial and travail and who in spite of the weight of years is still working in his own way to complete what is left yet unaccomplished."

In a message to the nation, the Congress President, Acharya Kripalani, said:

"This revolution which has ushered the birth of freedom for this land is a unique one in the history of the world. Never before was so great an event transforming the destiny of many millions of men and women consummated with such little bloodshed and violence. This is a triumph, not of one brute might over another, but of the spirit of freedom and humanity over the blinding greed of imperialism. That this has been possible is due to the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who, if any man may be so called, is the Father of our Nation. He has led us in the non-violent battle for freedom and he has shown us the way to make this freedom fruitful in the service of our people. To him we pay our homage."

Soul-stirring scenes of national rejoicings marked by an unique demonstration of Hindu-Muslim unity, were witnessed in Calcutta on the Independence Day celebration on the 15th of August. Fraternization between the Hindus and the Muslims which had dramatically started on the eve of the transfer of power was an inspiring feature of the day-long celebrations. Vast crowds of the Hindus and the Muslims freely intermingled with each other, dancing, singing, merry-making together in the public thoroughfares, and the streets, from an early hour of the morning till at late hour of the night, reverberated with deafening shouts of "Hindus and Muslims Unite" and "Jai Hind".

Gandhi's residence in Beliaghata became a place of pilgrimage for the citizens of Calcutta on Friday, August 15. All day long, unending stream of people wended their way to his residence and offered their respects to him. There were moving scenes of Hindu-Muslim fraternization in front of his residence.

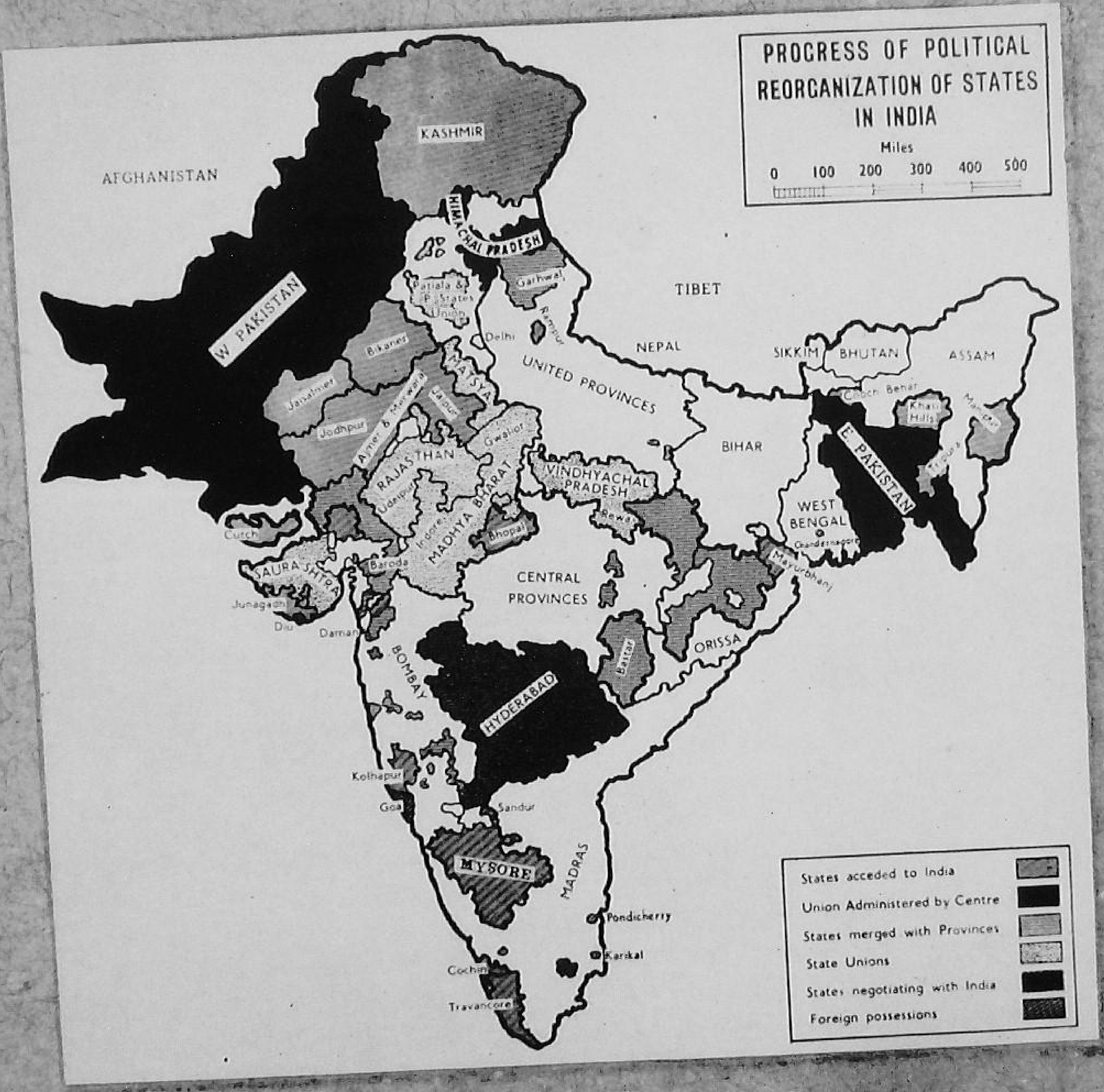
There were festivities all over the land. But the man who, more than anyone else, had been responsible for freeing India from the alien rule did not participate in these rejoicings. When an officer of the Information and Broadcasting Department of the Government of India came for a message, Gandhi replied that "he had run dry". When told again that if he did not give any message, it would not be good, Gandhi replied: "There is no message at all. If it is bad,

let it be so." Again, when a representative of the B. B. C. approached him for a message, which would be broadcast all over the world, he replied: "I must not yield to the temptation. You must forget that I know English."

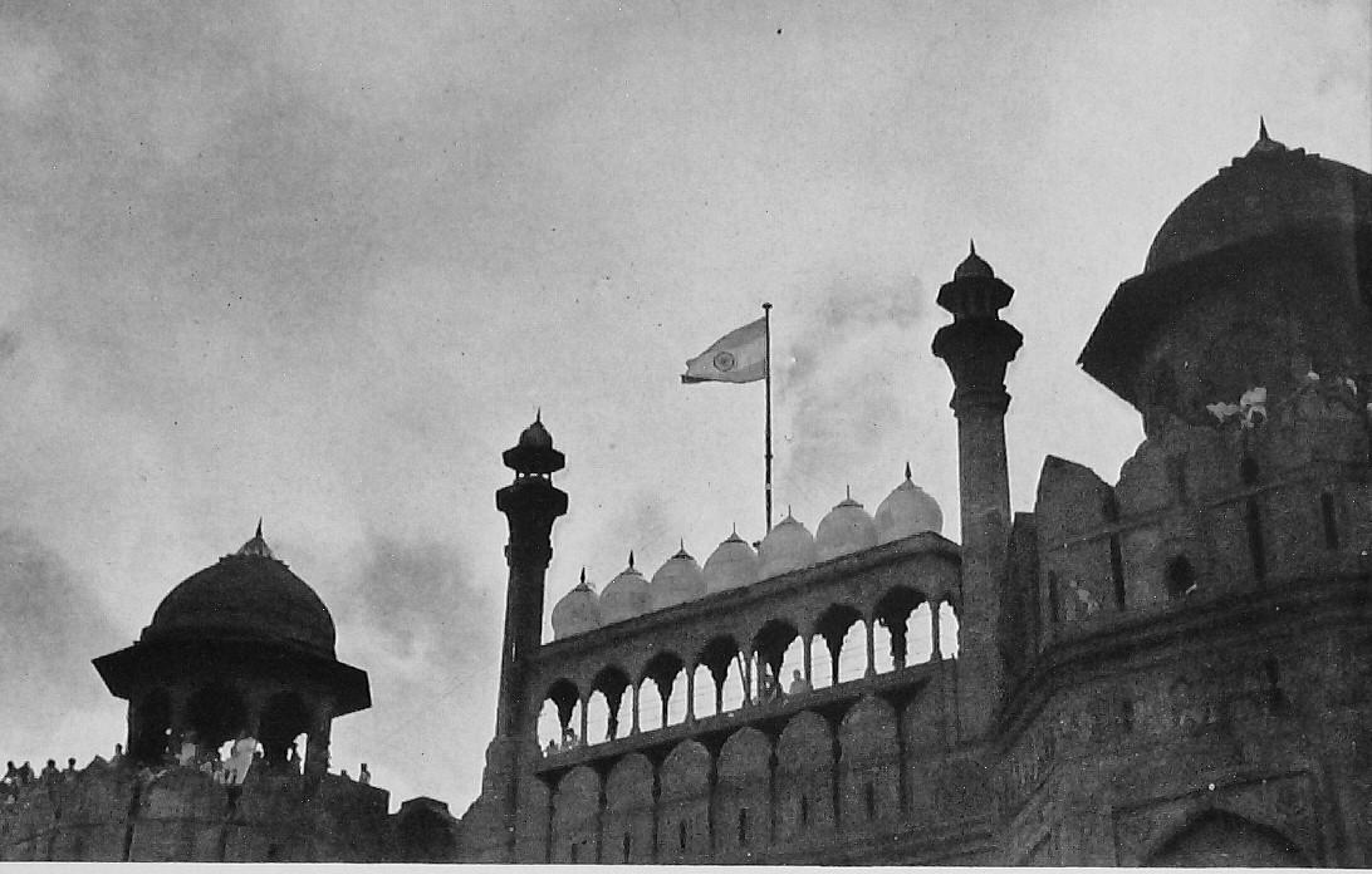
Gandhi observed the Independence Day by fasting and spinning. There was no special ceremony on the occasion in his own camp. He observed "Mahadev Desai Day", early in the morning, by holding prayers, which included extensive readings from the Gita.

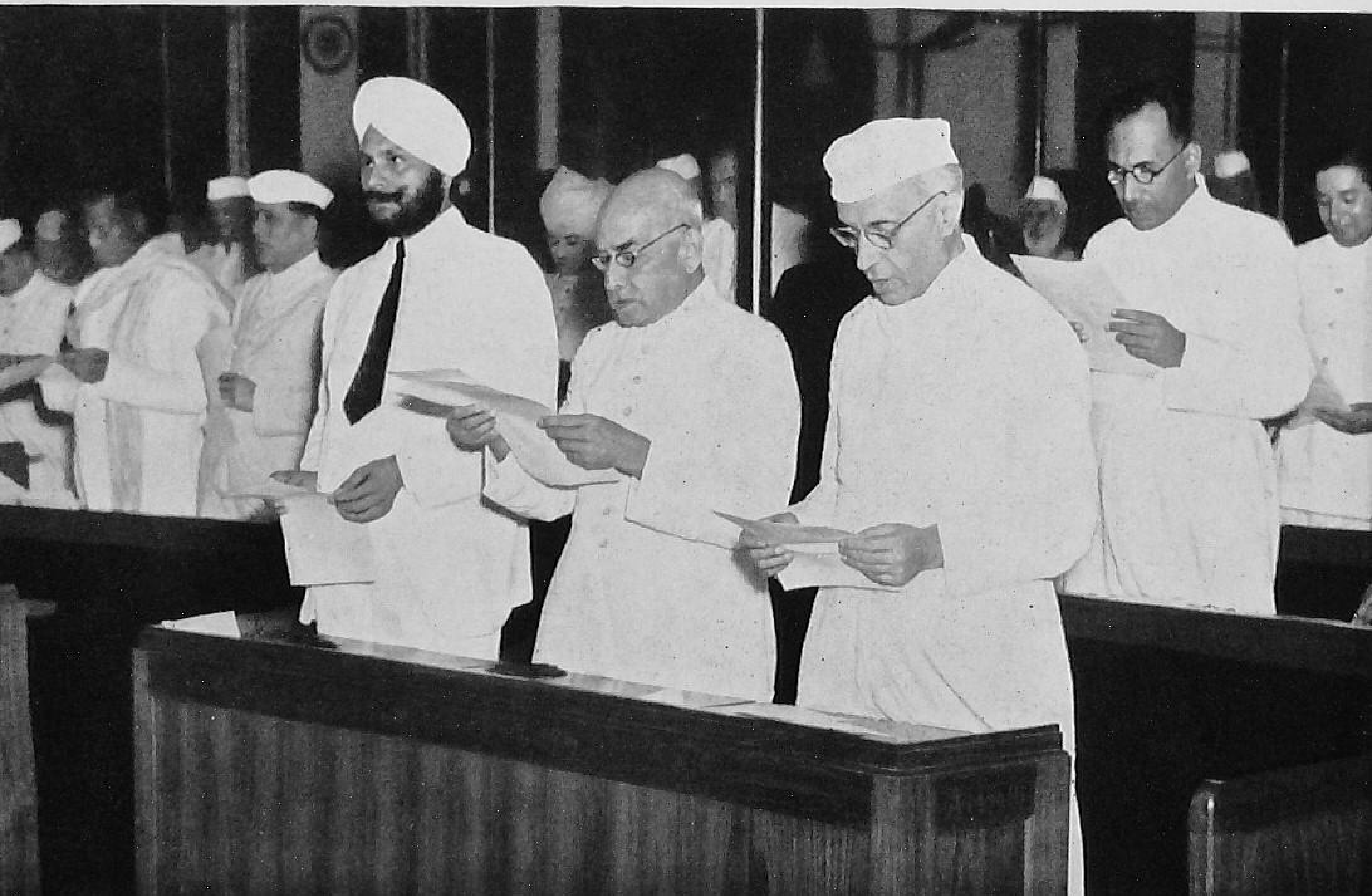
He insisted on walking to the prayer meeting which was held at Rash Bagan Maidan in Beliaghata. The crowd, through which he passed, was so dense, that what was five minutes' walk took nearly twenty minutes to cover. In his prayer address, he congratulated Calcutta on the Hindus and the Muslims meeting together in perfect friendliness. Muslims shouted the same slogans of joy, as the Hindus. They flew the Tricolour, without the slightest hesitation. And what was more, the Hindus were admitted to mosques and the Muslims were admitted to temples. This news reminded the speaker of the Khilafat days when the Hindus and the Muslims fraternized with one another. If this exhibition was from the heart and was not a momentary impulse, it was better than the Khilafat days. The simple reason was that they had both drunk the poison cup of disturbances. The nectar of friendliness should, therefore, taste sweeter than before. He was, however, very sorry to hear that, in a certain part, the Muslims experienced molestation. He hoped that Calcutta, including Howrah would be entirely free from the communal virus for ever. Then, indeed, they need have no fear about East Bengal and the rest of India. He was sorry, therefore, to hear that madness still raged in Lahore. He could hope and feel sure that the noble example of Calcutta, if it was sincere, would affect the Punjab and other parts of India. He then referred to Chittagong. Rain was no respecter of persons. It engulfed both Muslims and Hindus. It was the duty of the whole of Bengal to feel one with the sufferers of Chittagong.

He then referred to the fact that the people realizing that India was free, took possession of the Government House and in affection besieged their new Governor Rajaji. He would be glad, if it meant only a token of the people's power. But he would be sick and sorry, if the people thought that they could do what they liked with the Government and other property. That would be criminal lawlessness. He hoped, therefore, that they had of their own accord vacated



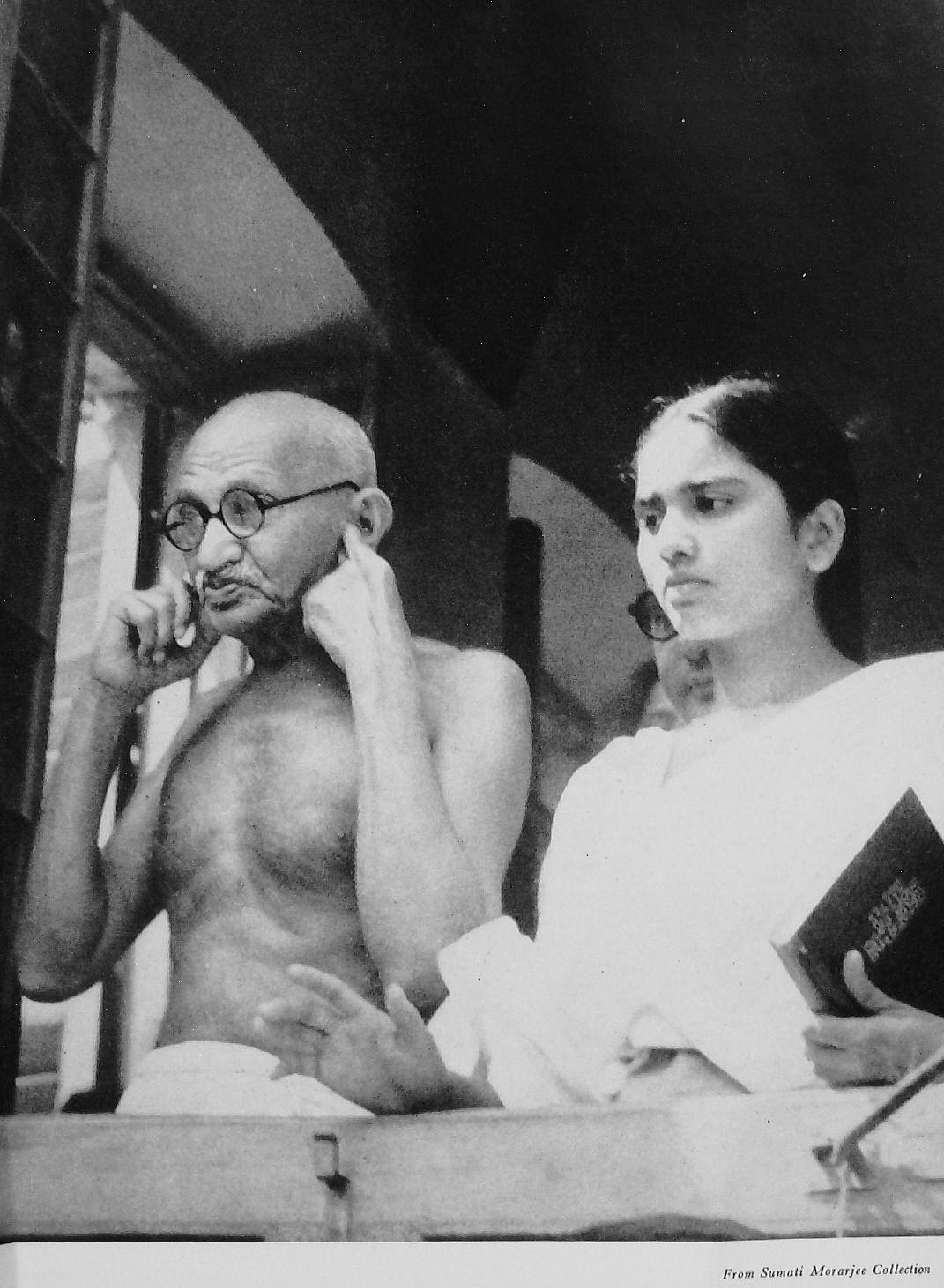
Map of India as at 14th August 1947





From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Declaration of India's independence on the midnight of August 14-15, 1947



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Gandhi plugging his ears against the deafening din of the demonstrators before his Beliaghata residence at Calcutta, August 15, 1947

Mammoth gathering in Calcutta on the Id Day

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

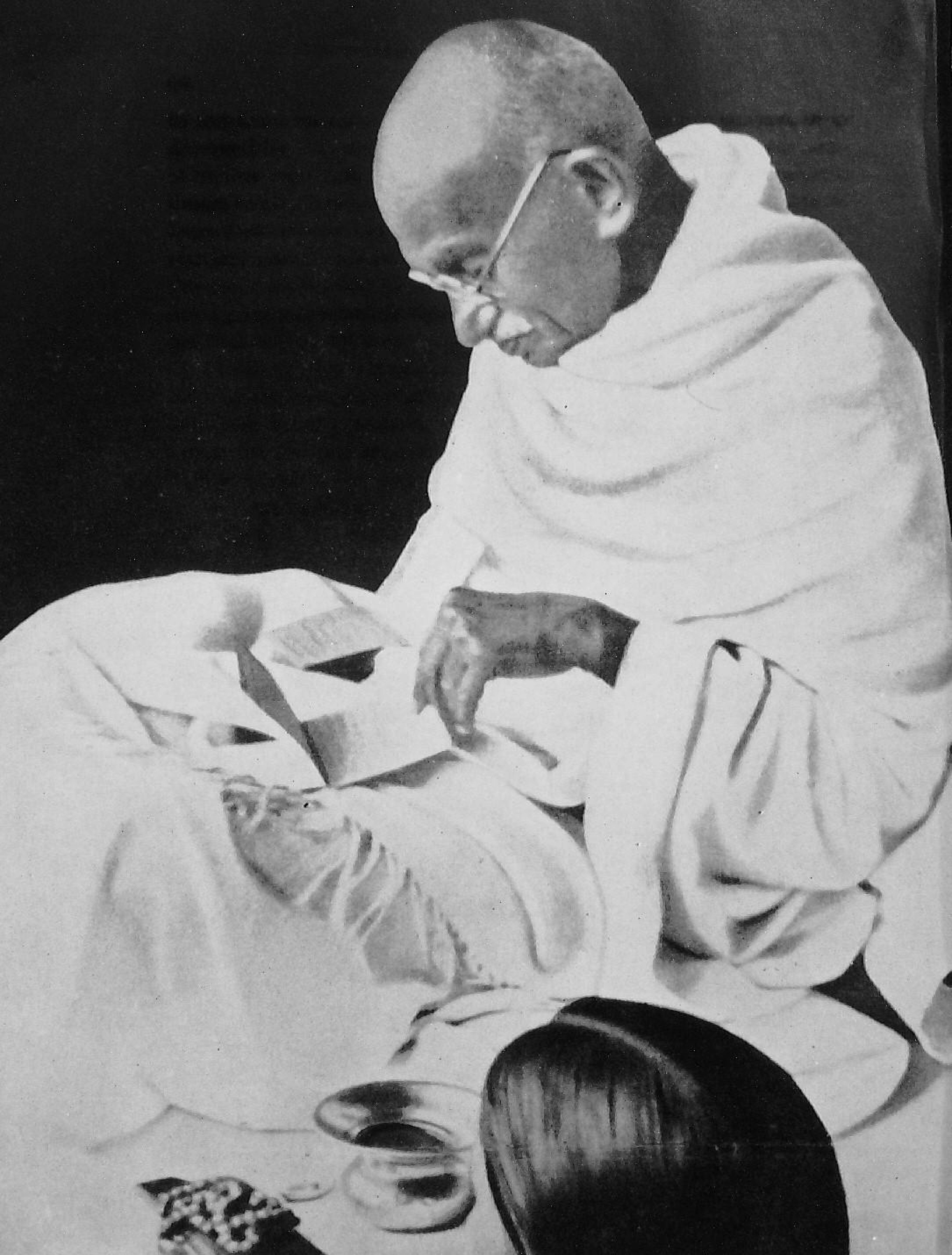
at Gandhi's prayer meeting, August 18, 1947

Photograph : Margaret Bourke-White

A column of refugees on foot

Photograph : Margaret Bourke-White

The great migration after the division of India



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Gandhi at work, Calcutta, August 1947

the Governor's palace, as readily as they had occupied it. He would warn the people that now that they were free, they would use the freedom with wise restraint. The people should know that they were to treat the Europeans who stayed in India with the same regard, as they would expect for themselves. They must know that they were masters of no one but of themselves. They must not compel anyone to do anything against his will.

After the prayers, he broke his twenty-four-hour fast which he had started on Thursday evening in observance of the Independence Day. His face beamed with joy, when Dr. P. C. Ghosh told him about the unique demonstrations of Hindu-Muslim fraternization in the city. During the night, Gandhi made a tour of Calcutta to witness, as to how the city was observing the Independence Day and how the communities were fraternizing.

On August 16, he wrote a significant editorial entitled "Miracle or Accident":

"Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy and I are living together in a Muslim *manzil* in Beliaghata, where the Muslims have been reported to be sufferers. We occupied the house on Wednesday, the 13th instant, and on the 14th it seemed, as if there never had been bad blood between the Hindus and the Muslims. In their thousands, they began to embrace one another and they began to pass freely through places which were considered to be points of danger by one party or the other. Indeed, the Hindus were taken to masjids by their Muslim brethren and the Muslims were taken by their Hindu brethren to mandirs. And both with one voice shouted 'Jai Hind' and 'Hindu-Muslims! Be One.' As I have said above, we are living in a Muslim residence and the Muslim volunteers are attending to our comforts with the greatest attention. The Muslim volunteers do the cooking. Many were eager to come from the Khadi Pratisthan for attendance, but I prevented them. I was determined that we should be fully satisfied with whatever the Muslim brothers and sisters were able to give for our creature comforts, and I must say that the determination has resulted in unmixed good. Here in the compound, numberless Hindus and Muslims continue to stream in, shouting favourite slogans. One can almost say that the joy of fraternization is leaping up from hour to hour.

"Is this to be called a miracle or an accident? By whatever name it may be described, it is quite clear that all the credit that is given

to me from all sides is quite undeserved; nor can it be said to be deserved by Shaheed Saheb. This sudden upheaval is not the work of one or two men. We are toys in the hands of God. He makes us dance to His tune. The utmost, therefore, that man can do is to refrain from interfering with the dance and that he should tender full obedience to his Maker's will. Thus considered, it can be said that, in this miracle, He has used us two as His instruments, and as for myself I only ask whether the dream of my youth is to be realized in the evening of my life.

"For those who have full faith in God, this is neither a miracle, nor an accident. A chain of events can be clearly seen to show that the two were being prepared, unconsciously to themselves, for fraternization. In this process, our advent on the scene enabled the onlooker to give us credit for the consummation of the happy event.

"Be that as it may, the delirious happenings remind me of the early days of the Khilafat movement. The fraternization then burst on the public, as a new experience. Moreover, we had then Khilafat and swaraj, as our twin goals. Today, we have nothing of the kind. We have drunk the poison of mutual hatred, and so this nectar of fraternization tastes all the sweeter, and the sweetness should never wear out.

"In the present exuberance, one hears also the cry of 'Long Live Hindustan and Pakistan' from the joint throats of the Hindus and the Muslims. I think it is quite proper. Whatever was the cause for the agreement, three parties accepted Pakistan. If then the two are not enemies, one of the other, and here evidently they are not, surely there is nothing wrong in the above cry. Indeed, if the two have become friends, not to wish long life to both the states would probably be an act of disloyalty."

At the prayer meeting on August 16th, there was a greater rush than on the previous day. Consequently, there was noise, where the pressure was felt. Gandhi, therefore, stopped the usual *bhajan* and refused to speak, if the noise did not subside. He asked Suhrawardy to speak with his powerful voice. He spoke to the vast audience who listened to him in silence and punctuated his remarks with applause when he lustily shouted "Jai Hind" and said he was proud to be a loyal inhabitant of West Bengal. He was then followed by Gandhi. He expressed his pleasure that, at the Chittaranjan Seva Sadan, the national flag was hoisted by an elderly Harijan *mehtarani*, who was

faithfully serving that institution. Similarly, for a district Congress Committee, of which he had forgotten the name for the moment, a Harijan girl performed the flag-hoisting ceremony. This was along the right lines and was in keeping with the present fraternal spirit of Calcutta. He hoped that the spirit was permanent and that there would be no trace of untouchability or inequality in Hinduism and that the Hindus and Muslims being from the same God, would never quarrel among one another. If this spirit persisted, it would spread throughout the length and breadth of India. Then there would be no fear of disturbance in Noakhali, or the Punjab.

On August 17, he wrote an article on "An Indian Governor":

"In construing the word India here, it includes both Hindustan and Pakistan. Hindustan may mean the country of Hindus, strictly so called, and Pakistan may mean the country of Muslims. Both the uses are, in my opinion, irregular. Hence, I have purposely used the word Hindustan.

"Khilafat-Swaraj-Non-co-operation Resolution of 1920 passed in Calcutta at the Special Session of the Congress, which has brought freedom from the British yoke, was for both the Hindus and the Muslims, designed to induce self-purification, so as to bring about non-co-operation between forces of evil and those of good. Hence—

"1. An Indian Governor should, in his own person and in his surroundings, be a teetotaller. Without this, the prohibition of the fiery liquid is wellnigh inconceivable.

"2. He and his surroundings should represent hand-spinning as a visible token of identification with the dumb millions of India, a token of the necessity of bread labour and organized non-violence, as against organized violence, on which the society of today seems to be based.

"3. He must dwell in a cottage, accessible to all, though easily shielded from gaze, if he is to do efficient work. The British Governor naturally represented the British might. For him and his, was erected a fortified residence—a large palace to be occupied by him and his numerous vassals who sustained his empire. The Indian prototype may keep somewhat pretentious buildings for receiving the princes and ambassadors of the world. For these, being guests of the Governor, should constitute an education in what even "Unto This Last", equality of all, should mean in concrete terms. For him, no expensive furniture, foreign or indigenous. Plain living and high thinking

must be his motto, not to adorn his entrance, but to be exemplified in daily life.

"4. For him, there can be no untouchability in any form whatsoever, no caste or creed or colour distinction. He must represent the best of all religions and all things, eastern or western. Being a citizen of India, he must be a citizen of the world. Thus simply, one reads, did the Caliph Omar, with millions of treasure at his feet, live; thus lived Janaka of ancient times; thus lived, as I saw him, the Master of Eton, in his residence, in the midst of, and surrounded by the sons of the Lords and Nabobs of the British Isles. Will the Governors of India of the famished millions do less?

"5. He will speak the language of the province of which he is the Governor, and Hindustani, the lingua franca of India written in the Nagari or the Urdu script. Hindustani is neither Sanskritized Hindi nor Persianized Urdu. This is emphatically the language which is spoken by the millions, north of the Vindhya range.

"This does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of the virtues that an Indian Governor should represent. It is merely illustrative.

"One would expect that the Britishers who have been chosen by Indian representatives as Governors, and who have taken the oath of fealty to India and her millions would endeavour, as far as possible to live the life, an Indian Governor is expected to live. They will represent the best that their country has to give to India and to the world."

Addressing the prayer meeting on August 17, Gandhi said that it was well for Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy to say sweet things. They were justified. There was no exaggeration in his speech. But he felt bound to draw attention to certain disturbing things. They should not be drowned in the pardonable exuberance they were witnessing. There were isolated spots in Calcutta, where it was not all well. He had heard that in one spot the Hindu residents were not prepared to welcome back the Muslim residents, who were obliged to leave their place. All this was bad. It was like a bad boil in an otherwise wholesome body. And if the boils were not looked after in time, they might poison the body.

Then he mentioned a letter he had received from Mr. Bahar, the secretary of the Muslim League. Mr. Bahar had made a suggestion about a joint influential committee going to the East and the West Bengal and consolidate the good work being done in Calcutta. The

speaker hoped the suggestion would be quickly acted upon. Another suggestion was that the havoc caused by the flood in the East Bengal should be a joint concern of the Hindus and Muslims. He agreed and he hoped that there would be a body of the Hindu and Muslim workers, who would tackle the subject efficiently. Both workers and grain were wanted more than money. The Mayor of Calcutta had sent him a cheque for Rs. 15,000, in aid of relief. He was thankful for the cheque. He would see to it that it was well employed.

Gandhi then referred to Chandernagore from which the news was received that the Administrator's bungalow was surrounded by those who called themselves satyagrahis but who were, in fact, *duragrahis*, if the statement received by him was true. It was suggested that he had approved of the step. He must say that it was wholly untrue. Some persons had come to him and he had said that this was no time for satyagraha. There never could be any for *duragraha*. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was there to look after such affairs. After all, the French were a great people, lovers of liberty. They must not be subjected to any strain by India, which had now come in possession of liberty. India was bound to protect the French possessions in India against any untoward action by the Indians. So he was glad that the chief minister had proceeded to Chandernagore, to find out the truth and do what he could.

Gandhi dealt with the way in which the people were treating the police who were posted to protect Shaheed Saheb and him. It was most improper to disregard police instructions. He had seen them undertaking their difficult task with exemplary patience and courtesy. It was wrong for crowds to take the law in their own hands. That way lay slavery, not freedom. He warned the public that he was thinking of approaching the authorities to withdraw their forces, for he did not like them to be subjected to insult for doing a public duty. He, however, expected that the crowd would become perfectly orderly, so that the contemplated withdrawal might not be necessary. The police and the military today were, after all, servants of the public and not their masters.

In conclusion, he referred to the forthcoming Id celebration. For twenty years, in South Africa, he had participated in the celebration with the Muslim friends in the masjids. Now that a flood of goodwill was sweeping over the city of Calcutta, he expected everyone to take such steps, as would render this friendly feeling permanent. It was

easy to share in a rising tide of emotion; but it was quite another matter to produce constructive workers, who would toil from day to day, in order to consolidate the feeling. He would love to see such work in the city, for he was sure that its effect would then be felt by the rest of the country. If they failed to do this, he warned them, today's freedom would prove only a nine days' wonder.

The Id fell on Monday, August 18. It gave Hindus and Muslims another opportunity to be nearer each other and to establish happy relationship between the two communities. From all the areas of the city, gaily attired Muslims, in their thousands, attended the morning congregational prayer on the maidan. Simultaneously, prayers were held in Nakhoda and other mosques in the city and in many places they had gifts of sweets and fruits from Hindus, who in many other ways associated themselves with the Id celebration. The Hindus and the Muslims exchanged fraternal greetings and several organizations arranged inter-communal dinners.

Muslims carrying the tricolour flags went to Gandhi's Beliaghata residence in the morning and greeted him with "Id Mubarak". He also received a number of Id presents from Muslims and in his turn distributed fruits to those who came to greet him. As he was observing his weekly silence at that time, he wrote on a piece of paper, "I send my Id greetings to all my Muslim brethren."

Throughout the day, there was free mixing of the Hindus and the Muslims in every thoroughfare, in trams, buses and cinema houses. The biggest mixed gathering of the day, however, was witnessed in the evening, when Gandhi addressed over three lakhs of Hindus and Muslims on the maidan.

Under a canopy, Gandhi sat surrounded by the leaders of both the communities. Dr. P. C. Ghosh, the chief minister, greeted the gathering with "Id Mubarak". Mr. Suhrawardy extended on behalf of his community his hands of co-operation to the Hindus.

He broke his weekly silence at 7.10 p.m., at the prayer meeting. In a short speech, he wished the vast gathering "Id Mubarak". He also made a reference to his visit in Barrackpore, where the Hindus and the Muslims had assured him that they would settle their quarrel and that they did not like to give him trouble about this.

There was a small gathering of local students in Gandhi's camp at Beliaghata. Gandhi first asked them if any of them had taken a part in the riots, to which they replied in the negative. Whatever

they had done was in self-defence; hence it was no part of the riot. This gave Gandhi an opportunity of speaking on some of the vital problems connected with non-violence. He said that mankind had all along tried to justify violence and war in terms of unavoidable self-defence. It was a simple rule that the violence of the aggressor could only be defeated by superior violence of the defender. All over the world, men had been caught in mad race for armaments, and no one yet knew, at what point of time, the world would be really safe enough for turning the sword into the plough. Mankind, he said, had not yet mastered the true art of self-defence.

But the great teachers, who had practised what they preached, had successfully shown that true defence lay along the path of non-retaliation. It might sound paradoxical; but this is what he meant. Violence always thrived on counter violence. The aggressor always had a purpose behind his attack; he wanted something to be done, some object to be surrendered by the defender. Now, if the defender steeled his heart and was determined not to surrender even an inch, and, at the same time, to resist the temptation of matching the violence of the aggressor by violence, the latter could be made to realize in a short while, that it would not be paying to punish the other party and his will could not be imposed in that way. This would involve suffering. It was this unalloyed self-suffering which was the truest form of self-defence, which knew no surrender.

But someone might ask that if, through such non-resistance, the defender was likely to lose his life, how could it be called self-defence? Jesus lost his life on the Cross, and the Roman Pilate won. But he did not agree. Jesus had won, as the world's history had abundantly shown. What did it matter if the body was dissolved in the process, so long as by the Christ's act of non-resistance, the forces of good were released in society?

This art of true self-defence, by means of which man gained his life by losing it, had been mastered and exemplified in the history of individuals. The method had not been perfected for application by large masses of mankind. India's satyagraha was a very imperfect experiment in that direction. Hence, during the Hindu-Muslim quarrel, it proved a failure on the whole.

The Kasturba trainees of Bengal came to meet Gandhi from their camp at Sahebnagar. The question which Gandhi took up for discussion was asked by one of the trainees: In view of the resistance

encountered from the village people and the numerous disappointments which they had to face, how would he advise them to proceed, so that success could be ensured? He began by saying that he was glad that a very fundamental question had been raised. He had, however, only one answer for it.

The education through which India had passed for more than a century was essentially designed for a particular purpose. In order to feed the interests of capitalism, the entire economic life of India had been changed, the city had become the centre of gravity and not the village; village had been dethroned from its position of supremacy and virtually been converted into a slum, and kept as far away from the city, as practicable. The educational system had been planned to supply the needs of this lop-sided economy. If, now, we wanted to create a new India, then our outlook must be changed altogether. Democracy had to be built up inch by inch in economic, social and political life. Considering the magnitude of the task, it naturally would require a very stout heart to grapple with the problem.

To the trainees, his advice was one. They must be brave, intelligent and persevering. The villagers might not readily respond. They might even prove hostile. Many interests would have to be disturbed before necessary change could be effected. But non-violent workers should choose the line of least resistance. They should suffer in their own person, before they could aspire to gain co-operation of the inert or hostile villagers. Day in and day out, they must persevere at their chosen task, whether it was village sanitation or the imparting of education to a few children, whom nobody else would care to touch. They might not have the resources to supply their own bread. Even then, through hunger, they must persist without resentment, without bitterness. Then only will their conduct strike the imagination of villagers; and this element of surprise will open the way into their hearts. Once the inert mass has begun to yield, work will make rapid progress.

Another trainee then stated that there were no signs of response from the villagers, even after one year of patient work. Gandhi comforted her by saying that one year's work was not enough. We have to sweep aside the accumulated debris of centuries of subjugation. Even a lifetime might not prove enough. If our education had been otherwise, we might not have perhaps yielded so readily to despondence. We have to steel our hearts and look forward to the bright

future to enable us to get out of the slough of despond. So long as we persevere, the struggle itself is victory. It was only courage of this kind which could lead India to the new age.

Addressing the readers of *Harijan*, Gandhi wrote:

"It occurs to me that now that freedom from the British rule has come, the *Harijan* papers are no longer wanted. My views remain, as they are. In the scheme of reconstruction for free India, its villages should no longer depend, as they are now doing, on its cities, but cities should exist only for and in the interest of the villages. Therefore, the charkha should occupy the proud position of the centre, round which all the life-giving village industries would revolve. But this seems to be receding into the background. The same thing can be said of many other things, of which I used to draw a tempting picture. I can no longer dare to do so. My life has become, if possible, more tempestuous than before. Nor can I at present claim any place as a permanent habitation. The columns are predominantly filled by my after-prayer speeches. In the original, I contribute on an average, only one and half columns per week. This is hardly satisfactory. I would like, therefore, the readers of *Harijan* weeklies to give me their frank opinion, as to whether they really need their *Harijan* weekly to satisfy their political or spiritual hunger."

Professor Stuart Nelson, who had come to see him before he left for America, asked Gandhi, why it was that the Indians, who had more or less successfully gained independence through the peaceful means, were now unable to check the tide of civil war through the same means? Gandhi replied that it was indeed a searching question which he must answer. He confessed that it had become clear to him that what he had mistaken for satyagraha was not satyagraha, but passive resistance, a weapon of the weak. Indians harboured ill will and anger against their erstwhile rulers, while they pretended to resist them non-violently. Their resistance was, therefore, inspired by violence, and not by regard for the man in the British, whom they should convert through satyagraha.

Now that the British were voluntarily quitting India, the apparent non-violence went to pieces in a moment. The attitude of violence which we had secretly harboured, in spite of the restrain imposed by the Congress, now recoiled upon us and made us fly at each other's throats, when the question of the distribution of power came up. If India could now discover a way of sublimating the force of violence

which had taken a communal turn, and turning it into constructive peaceful ways, whereby differences of interests could be liquidated, it would be a great day indeed.

Gandhi then proceeded to say that it was indeed true, that many English friends had warned him that the so-called non-violent non-co-operation of India was not really non-violent. It was the passivity of the weak, not the non-violence of the stout in heart, who would never surrender their sense of human unity and brotherhood even in the midst of conflict of interests, and who would ever try to convert and not coerce their adversary.

He admitted that this was indeed true. He had all along laboured under an illusion. But he was never sorry for it. He realized that if his vision were not covered by that illusion, India would never have reached the point, which it had today.

India was now free, and the reality was clearly revealed to him. Now that the burden of subjection had been lifted, all the forces of good had to be marshalled in one great effort to build a country which forsook the accustomed method of violence, in order to settle human conflicts, whether they were between two states or between two sections of the same people. He had the faith that India would rise to the occasion and would prove to the world that the birth of the two new states would be not a menace, but a blessing to the rest of mankind. It was the duty of free India to perfect the instrument of non-violence for dissolving collective conflicts, if its freedom was going to be really worth while.

Victory Over Evil

1947

EVERY DAY, in one quarter of Calcutta or another, the same question had been cropping up: how can we trust Muslims, how can we trust Mr. Suhrawardy, after the bitter things we have experienced for one whole year? Gandhi, unfailingly, tried to lift the audience from this way of looking at things to political sanity.

Speaking to a group of students, he remarked that they should remember that Muslim League was fighting for a political objective, namely, the establishment of Pakistan. The rest of India was against the vivisection; its aim was to preserve India undivided. But whatever the cause actuating the parties, they, the British Government and the Congress, the League and the Sikhs ultimately accepted the partition of India. Having got Pakistan, Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah said that in Pakistan, there was equality of treatment for all—Muslims and all minorities—the Congress claiming likewise.

Gandhi had been drawing pointed reference at every meeting, or among every group, wherever opportunity presented itself, that now that the struggle for Pakistan and Akhand Hindustan was over, we must settle down to the reality, that in each state the Hindus and the Muslims had to live together as common citizens. If any of them still swore by the past, it would not help but hinder us in our forward march. We must accept facts and try to convert every citizen into a worthy member of either state. If we treated the Muslims in the Indian Union as aliens, who had fought for Pakistan, and tried to keep them in subjection, we would only succeed in proving our political bankruptcy. Today, they were no less citizens of the Union than anyone else. The Muslims had accepted the fact of their Indian citizenship, and as a proof of that, everyone of them, from Shaheed Suhrawardy downwards, had been lustily shouting "Jai Hind".

Addressing the big prayer gathering at Beliaghata on August 19, 1947, Gandhi apologized for being over an hour late. His own party

was not at fault. Because of the misdeeds of the majority, who were Hindus, Dr. Prafulla Ghosh, Shaheed Saheb, he and the others had to go to Kanchrapara. Then, on return, they were stopped by some parties, who wanted to acclaim their joy. This sort of acclamation, if it was not tempered with restraint, would kill their leaders and then they would deplore the embarrassing affection. He warned the people against being unduly elated by all the fraternization that they were now witnessing. Behind it, there were pointers like Barrackpore, Kanchrapara and other places he could mention. He would not let them plead excuse or extenuation. There was neither excuse, nor extenuation, for the majority in Pakistan or in Hindustan. If the Hindu majority treasured their religion and duty, they would be just at all cost. They would overlook the limitations or the mistakes of the minority, who had no one but the majority to look to for justice. He had to listen, not without shame and sorrow, to the statement that a Muslim friend made to him. He said with a sigh that there was nothing left but a kind of subjection to the Hindu majority and they might have to suffer in silence the playing of music before the mosques, whilst they were offering prayers. He would have no such despair on the part of Muslims. The friend, who made the remark, did not realize that he unconsciously implied that the Muslim majority would inflict revenge in Pakistan. The speaker hoped that it would never be so, either in Hindustan or Pakistan. The proper thing was for each majority to do their duty in all humility, irrespective of what the other majority did in the other state. He suggested, therefore, that until the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and the Union agreed upon another course in both the states, the practice that was followed during the British regime, often under compulsion, should be fully and voluntarily followed in both the states. Those who thought that they could haughtily impose their own will on the minority were foolish and were vastly mistaken. If, therefore, they wanted to consolidate the prevailing goodwill, they would see to it that they acted on the square under all circumstances.

On August 20 the prayer meeting was held at Khengrapati, which was a unique scene in fraternization. More than four lakhs of people of all classes and communities attended the meeting. People failing to go near the venue of the meeting, thronged round on the roofs of the adjoining buildings. Hundreds of people were seen climbing on all the available trees in the neighbourhood.

Gandhi stated that he had received letters to the effect that, now that there was peace in Calcutta, he should go to the Punjab. He said that when God called him, he would most certainly go there. But the two Prime Ministers of the two dominions had announced that their major preoccupation would be to restore complete peace in the Punjab. They would use every resource at their disposal to establish peace and they would mobilize the public opinion of the Punjab. And this should be enough for them to hope that things in the Punjab would be as good, as in Calcutta.

Referring to the Central Peace Committee, Gandhi said that it should consolidate the results so far achieved. They had to see that the poor Muslims were rehabilitated, just as the Hindus had to be rehabilitated in the areas from which they had been evacuated. The local peace committees should be set up in each *mohalla*; and they should find at least one Hindu and one Muslim of clean heart to work together. These peace committees must tour the areas under their jurisdiction. They should work to create a feeling of friendliness, wherever it was lacking. For the purpose of rehabilitation, they would have to go into details. Food and shelter and clothings had to be found for the evacuees returning to their homes. It would be a great day indeed for Calcutta, if its men and women co-operated in this manner to consolidate their good feelings, which had been so much in evidence during the last few days. In this task, all the parties were to co-operate. For, now that all the parties concerned had come to an agreement with regard to the division of India into two dominions, there was no longer any reason to quarrel and they could join hands in the task of restoring peaceful conditions.

The next day, he drew attention to the joint flags of Pakistan and the Indian Union that were being prominently flown in the prayer meeting and he hoped that that pleasing sight would be universal in India. He was glad too that Shaheed Saheb had suggested the revival of the slogan "Hindu-Muslim-ki jai", for it was started during the palmy Khilafat days. He recalled the memory of the old days, when one Muslim fellow prisoner used to sing Iqbal's "Hindostan Hamara". The words of Iqbal's poem were as sweet as the tune. And among them, what could be sweeter than that religion never taught mutual hatred? He hoped and he prayed that the beginning thus auspiciously made would last for ever, and that they would never appeal to the sword for the solution of their difficulties. If that was

to be so, they would see that no untoward incidents were allowed to happen and flimsy things were not exaggerated, so as to make them look like a communal disturbance, as had come to his notice even that very day.

Lastly he referred to the award of the umpire in the Boundary Commission. The umpire was chosen by all parties to the dispute. It would be unjust and unworthy to impute motives to the umpire. He was specially invited by the parties to the thankless task. The parties and the public they represented, were loyally to abide by the award. No award that he knew—and he had to do with many arbitrations—completely satisfied all the parties. But once having made the choice, they were bound to carry out the terms of the award. No doubt, the best way was for them to adjust differences themselves. This royal road was open to them any time, as Nazimuddin Saheb and Dr. Ghosh, the two Premiers had wisely pointed out.

He knew that the Muslims of Murshidabad and of Malda were severely disappointed as the Hindus in Khulna or in Gopalganj, and the Buddhists in the Chittagong Hill tracts. The latter had gone to East Bengal. He would say to all these parties that it was not only foolish but unbecoming, to quarrel over the award. It should not matter that on the 15th, the day was celebrated according to the national division. If he had been consulted, he would have advised non-celebration, because of the state of uncertainty.

On August 23, Gandhi referred to the cry of Allah-O-Akbar to which some Hindus had objected. He held that it was probably a cry than which a greater one had not yet been produced by the world. It was a soul-stirring religious cry, which meant God only was great. There was nobility in the meaning. Did that cry become objectionable, because it was in Arabic? He admitted that it had in India a questionable association. It often terrified the Hindus, because sometimes, the Muslims in anger come out of the mosques with that cry on their lips to belabour the Hindus. He confessed that the original had no such association. So far as he was aware, the cry had no such association in the other parts of the world. If, therefore, there was to be a lasting friendship between the two, the Hindus should have no hesitation in uttering the cry together with their Muslim friends. God was known by many names and had many attributes. Rama, and Rahim, Krishna and Karim were all names of the one God. "Sat Shri Akal" was an equally potent cry. Should a single Muslim

or Hindu hesitate to utter it? It meant that God was and nothing else was. The Ramdhun had the same virtue.

Gandhi then came to "Bande Mataram". That was no religious cry. It was a purely political cry. The Congress had to examine it. A reference was made to Gurudev about it. And both the Hindu and the Muslim members of the Congress Working Committee had to come to the conclusion that its opening lines were free from any possible objection, and he pleaded that it should be sung together by all on proper occasion. It should never be a chant to insult or to offend the Muslims. It was to be remembered that it was the cry that had fired political Bengal. Many Bengalis had sacrificed their lives for the political freedom with that cry on their lips. Though, therefore, he felt very strongly about "Bande Mataram" as an ode to Mother India, he advised his League friends to refer the matter to the League High Command. He would be surprised, if in view of the growing friendliness between the Hindus and the Muslims, the Muslim League High Command objected to the prescribed lines of "Bande Mataram", the national song and national cry of Bengal which sustained Bengal, when the rest of India was almost asleep and which was, so far as he was aware, acclaimed by the Hindus, as well as the Muslims of Bengal. No doubt, every act must be purely voluntary on the part of either partner. Nothing could be imposed in true friendship.

He referred to the deputation he had from the Punjabi friends, who had drawn a terrible picture of what was said to be going on in the Punjab and who on the strength of the information requested him immediately to proceed to the Punjab. They had informed him that, before the killing and arson in the Punjab, what had happened in Bengal was nothing. Lahore was almost denuded of the Hindus and the Sikhs, as was Amritsar of the Muslims. He hoped that the information was highly coloured. The Punjabis of Calcutta could not know the true situation in the Punjab. Be that as it may, he was sure that if the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims of Calcutta were sincere in their professions of friendship, they would write to their fellowmen in the Punjab and ask them to desist from this mutual slaughter. The declarations of the Dominion Premiers could not go in vain. He could never believe that the Punjab leaders would not like non-Muslims in the Pakistan part, and non-Hindus and non-Sikhs in the other part. The logical consequence would then be that

there would be no gurudwaras and no mandirs in the West Punjab and no mosques in the East Punjab. The picture was too gruesome to be ever true.

Lastly, Gandhi referred to the Nationalist Muslims, who had gone to see him. They twitted him for giving importance and life to the Muslim League and neglecting the Nationalist Muslims. He could not plead guilty to either charge. The Muslim League had gained importance without his or the Congress aid. It became great, because, rightly or wrongly, it had caught Muslim fancy. The Congress and he had to deal with and recognize the fact that faced them. He was not sorry for having visited Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah eighteen times in Bombay. His friends should also understand that he alone could have done nothing without Shaheed Saheb and Osman Saheb and the other League members. There was no question of neglect of the Nationalist Muslims. Nationalism of a man was its own merit. It demanded no recognition. He would ask them to remain what they were and to exhibit courage, self-sacrifice and true knowledge, born of study, and he was certain that, whether they were few or many, they would make their mark on India's future. He would even ask them to join the Muslim League and oppose it from within, whenever they found it to be reactionary. Whilst he said all this, he would advise the Leaguers to approach the Nationalist Muslims in a friendly spirit, whether they remained out or came in. True friendship did not admit of exclusion, without the soundest reason.

Gandhi was given a civic reception by the Calcutta Corporation on the Maidan in the evening of August 24. Paying tribute to him, the mayor said: "You are the symbol of truth and non-violence. You have freed Mother India from bondage, you have conquered hatred and established peace." Gandhi held his prayer after the reception and delivered his message.

Gandhi said that he could not help recalling the late Dr. P. C. Roy under whose roof he had lived for one month in 1901. When he was with the late Deshbandhu Das, he used to see him with a few scientists engaged in lively but strictly scientific conversation under the shadow of the Octerlomy Monument, near which they had met. That was their recreation. He asked him whether they had any drinks or eatables. Dr. Roy most emphatically replied "No". Their food and drink consisted of their instructive, as distinguished from idle conversation.

Referring to the address, Gandhi said that this was the third time he was receiving an address from Calcutta Corporation. The first was given to him by the late Deshbandhu, when he was the mayor. Then at the hands of Nalini Babu, when he was the mayor. He recalled the fact that the caskets were then auctioned in the interest of the Harijans. He hoped that this casket too would be sold in the same interest by the mayor.

He would repeat what he had said in answer to the first address that he could not be satisfied, till Calcutta had become the premier city in the world for sanitation. He included in this the sanitation of the streets in Calcutta, which was absent today. Citizens should have healthy minds in healthy bodies. Then they would have no goondas, no vagabonds, no drunkards. If the mortality in Calcutta was to be reduced, Calcutta should be flowing with clean milk. Today, it was a most difficult commodity to procure. Then he would expect the corporators, by honest application, to put the friendship between the Hindus and the Muslims on a permanent footing.

Gandhi stated that he had a message from Khwaja Saheb Nazimuddin that he should help in procuring at least 500 tons of rice out of the shipment that was coming from Burma. The need was so urgent that the ship with the rice should be diverted to Chittagong to deliver the 500 tons. He heartily associated himself with the request and he hoped that Dr. Rajendra Prasad would, if it was at all possible, allow 500 tons of the precious cargo to be delivered at the Chittagong port.

In this connection, he could not help mentioning the complaint that the petty officials in charge of flood relief confined the distribution to Muslim sufferers only. He hoped the news was not true. If unfortunately it was, he had no doubt that the ministers and the high officials would redress the wrong. If the two dominions were to live creditably and as friends, the communal spirit would be wholly purged. It was up to the Hindu and the Muslim leaders to see that the seeds of poison that were sown, while they were fighting, would be removed forthwith. Then he deplored the fact that the Muslims in the Government services, when the choice was offered to them, preferred Pakistan, and the Hindus preferred the Indian Union. The choice was made, he did not doubt, in haste. He would be sorry to find that the communal virus had now entered the services. He advised that the two Prime Ministers should confer with each other

and if it was at all honestly possible, the services should be given the opportunity to reconsider their choice. It would be a sorry thing for India if, the Hindu officials could not be trusted by the Muslims and *vice versa*. Much would depend upon the leaders, who influenced the services and the public.

He heard that Khulna was to celebrate its entry into Pakistan. He deplored such celebration after the award. But he was consoled by Shaheed Saheb that the celebration would be joint and that the Hindus were associating with it. Nevertheless, he could not regard this example with happiness. The jubilant parties ought to restrain themselves, as the aggrieved ones should accept the award with perfect resignation. The award must be regarded as final, except to the extent that the ministers of the two dominions agreed to vary it for the mutual satisfaction of the parties concerned. There was no other worthy or gentlemanly way.

On August 25, he referred to the disturbances in Sylhet:

"I am sorry that today being my silence day, I cannot speak to you. I have, therefore, to write out what I wish to say to you. I have been speaking every day about the vital duty of the Hindus in West Bengal, who are a majority community there, towards their Muslim brethren. This duty they will perform truly, if the Hindus are able to forget the past. We know, how all over the world, the enemies have become fast friends. The example of the Britons and the Boers who fought one another strenuously, becoming friends, we all know. There is much greater reason, why the Hindus and Muslims should become friends. We cannot do that, if we are not great enough to shed all malice.

"This evening I wish to devote to Sylhet. I have received frantic telegrams from Sylhet about the serious riots that have broken out there. The cause of these riots is not known. I am sorry that I am unable to go just now to Sylhet, nor am I vain enough to think that my presence would immediately abate mob fury. I know, too, that one should not without peremptory cause abandon his present duty, however humble it may be, in favour of one which may appear to be higher. To adopt the Salvation Army language, we are all soldiers of God to fight the battle of right against wrong, by means which are strictly non-violent and truthful. As His soldiers, ours is 'not to reason why', ours is 'but to do and die'. Though, therefore, I am unable to respond to the urgent call of the sufferers of Sylhet,

I can appeal, not in vain, to reason the authorities in East Bengal in general and Sylhet in particular, to put forth their best effort on behalf of the sufferers and deal sternly with the recalcitrants. Now that there is peace between the Hindus and the Muslims, I am sure the authorities do not relish these ugly outbreaks. It would be wrong and misleading to underestimate the trouble by calling it the work of the goondas. The minorities must be made to realize that they are as much valued citizens of the state they live in, as the majority. Let the Chief Ministers of the two divisions of Bengal meet often enough and jointly devise means to preserve peace in the two states and to find enough healthy food and clothing for the inhabitants and enough work for the masses in East and West Bengal. When the masses, Hindu and Muslim, will see their chiefs acting together and working together honestly, courageously and without inter-mission, the masses living in the two states will take the cue from the leaders and act accordingly. To the sufferers, I would advise bravely to face the future and never to give way to panic. Such disturbances do happen in the lifetime of a people. Manliness demands that there should be no weakness shown in facing them. Weakness aggravates the mischief, courage abates it."

The above message was written out in English, in order to enable Nirmal Bose easily to render it in Bengali. But, as, owing to heavy rains, Gandhi reached the meeting at six o'clock, instead of five, and as there were only a few minutes left to break the silence, he was able to speak at the meeting.

He referred to the visit of the Punjabi friends who pressed him to proceed to the Punjab, as early as possible. He assured them that he was in constant correspondence with Nehru. After all, the Punjab was as much his, as any other part of India; for, he claimed to be the servant of the whole of India. Moreover, he had passed six months in that province during the martial law days. He would hasten to the Punjab, as early as necessary. Indeed, he was wanted in Sylhet, Malda, Murshidabad and other places. It was not given to any one man to cover all calls upon his time, nor was it healthy to depend upon man's assistance in times of trouble. It was manly and dignified to rely upon God for the dissolution of all troubles. He was the only infallible help, guide and friend.

On August 27, Gandhi told the prayer audience that the present was his second visit to Matiaburz. The first was when Maulana Azad

and he visited them years ago, because there was a fight between Hindu and Muslim workmen. Fortunately, when they reached the scene of trouble, it was almost over, but they got undeserved credit. The present was a happy occasion. The Hindus and Muslims had adjusted their differences and had become friends. He hoped that this was a lasting friendship. He wanted to say a few words to the workmen in the working men's locality. He hoped that there was no distinction between the Hindus and the Muslims in labour. They all were labourers. If the communal canker entered their ranks, both would weaken labour and, therefore, themselves and their country. Labour was a great leveller of all distinctions. If they realized that truth, he would like them to go one step further. Labour, because it chose to remain unintelligent, either became subservient, or insolently believed in damaging the capitalists' goods and machinery or even in killing the capitalists. He was a labourer by conviction and a bhangi. As such, his interests were bound with those of labour. As such, he wished to tell them that violence would never save them. They would be killing the goose, that laid the golden eggs. What he had been repeating for years was that labour was far superior to capital. Without labour, gold and silver and copper were a useless burden. It was labour, which extracted the precious ores from the bowels of the earth. He could quite conceive labour existing without metal. Labour was priceless, not gold. He wanted marriage between capital and labour. They could work wonders in co-operation. But that could happen only, when labour was intelligent enough to co-operate with itself and then offer co-operation with capital on terms of honourable equality. Capital controlled labour, because capital knew the art of combination. Drops in separation could only fade away, drops in co-operation made the ocean, which carried on its broad bosom the ocean greyhounds. Similarly, if all the labourers in any part of the world combined together, then they could not be tempted by the higher wages or helplessly allow themselves to be attracted for, say, a pittance. A true and non-violent combination of labour would act like a magnet, attracting to it all the needed capital. The capitalists would then exist only as trustees. When that happy day dawned, there would be no difference between capital and labour. The labour will have ample food, good and sanitary dwellings, all the necessary education for their children and ample leisure for self-education and proper medical assistance.

Then he talked of the Nationalist Muslims who had sent him a note: "You have expressed the opinion that the Nationalist Muslims should join the League. Then, does it imply that the Congress has now become a communal organization?"

Gandhi said in reply that he was not guilty of asking them to discard nationalism or of expecting the Congress to be another Hindu Sabha. He hoped that the Congress would never commit suicide by being a communal organization. When the Congress ceased to represent all who were proud to call themselves Indians, whether the prince or the pauper, Hindus, Muslims, or any other, it will have destroyed itself. Therefore, he could not advise a Muslim Congressman to join the League, if the condition of joining the League was to discard or suppress his Congress membership. He would vote for those resolutions of the League which were in the nation's interest and against those which were contrary to the nation's interest. He had several Muslims of staunch faith in mind, who were neither in the Congress nor in the Muslim League. He advised the Nationalist Muslims to join the Muslim League, if they wanted to affect the Muslim masses. Real nationalists needed no encouragement from him, or anyone else. Nationalism, like virtue, was its own reward. His one warning was, that they should never think of power or bettering their worldly prospects by joining the one or the other organization. A nationalist would ever think of service, never of power or riches. There could be only one President of the Congress or the League. Presidentship came by merit and strength of service. The Muslim League had become what it was, not by his or Congress cajoling. The Qaid-e-Azam was an able president, whom neither riches, nor titles could buy. He was a front-rank barrister and a rich man. Being the son of a merchant, he knew how to multiply his earnings as a lawyer by wise investments. This acknowledgement did not mean that he liked all his ways, or that the latter had led the Muslims in the right way. He had his differences with the Qaid-e-Azam and the League. But he could not withhold merit, where it was due. It was, he hoped, clear to the Nationalist Muslims under what conditions he advised them to join the League.

On August 28, after prayer, he addressed the students of Calcutta at the University Science College. He said that he had done teaching in his own way from his early youth and probably the very first meeting he addressed after his return to India in 1915 was that of

students. Since then, he had addressed numerous students' meetings throughout his many wanderings in India. He was not new to them nor were they new to him. But of late years, he had ceased to address meetings, as he used to do before. He was, therefore, glad that he was able to address the students. Their vice-chancellor was good enough to see him about the evening's proceedings. He was nervous about students' behaviour towards Shaheed Suhrawardy Saheb. He said that he would have only the prayer and his usual after-prayer speech. It should not have been so. Everywhere, there appeared to be anarchy in the student world. Students did not tender obedience to their teachers and their vice-chancellor. On the contrary, they expected obedience from their teachers. It was a painful exhibition on the part of those who were to be the future leaders of the nation. They gave an exhibition of unruliness that evening. He was faced with placards in the foreign tongue, depicting his comrade Shaheed Saheb in unbecoming language. He said to them that, inasmuch as they had insulted Shaheed Saheb, they had insulted the speaker. Shaheed Saheb could not be insulted by the language used against him. But he could not take up that attitude. The students should be, above all, humble and correct.

At the prayer meeting, on August 29, "Bande Mataram" was sung and the audience, including Shaheed Suhrawardy and other Muslims on the platform, stood up, Gandhi alone keeping seated. He commenced his speech by congratulating Shaheed Saheb and the other Muslims on standing. He himself purposely kept seated, because he had learnt that Indian culture did not require standing as a mark of respect when any national song or *bhajan* was sung. It was an unnecessary importation from the West. A respectable posture on such occasions was the correct attitude. After all, it was the mental attitude that really mattered, not the superficial appearance. He then suggested that there should be one universal notation for "Bande Mataram", if it was to stir millions; it must be sung by millions in one tune and one mode. After all, national songs could only be two or three. But they should all have their common notation. It was up to the Shantiniketan authorities or some such authoritative society to produce an acceptable notation.

He then referred to the Christians. He had the pleasure of receiving them the day before. They said that the major communities had taken care of themselves, but what was to happen to the Christian

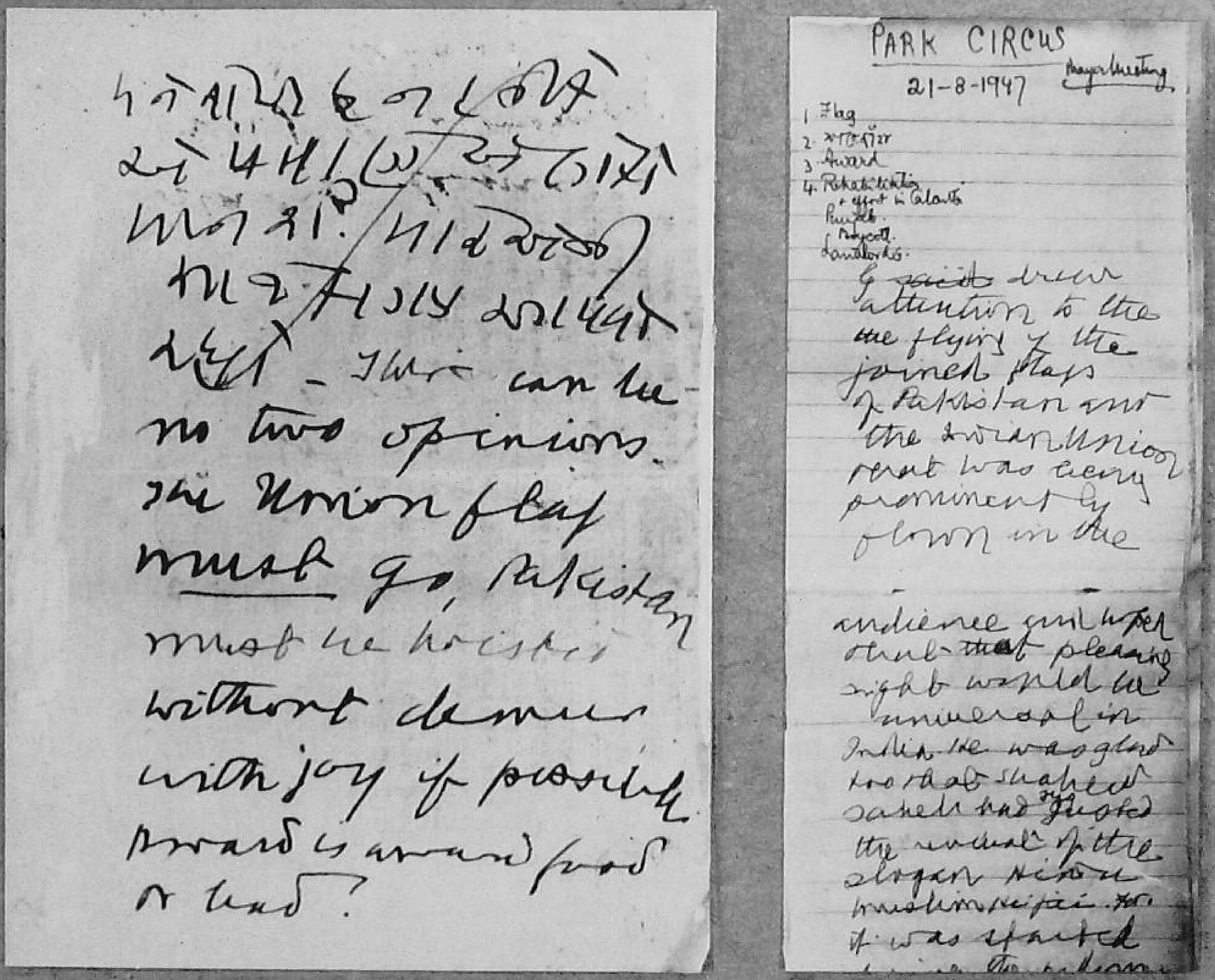
Indians? Were they to have no seats in the Governments or in the legislatures? He told them that the poisonous favouritism of foreign rule was dead and gone. Merit should now be the sole test. In a well-ordered society, there should be no minority. Why should they not feel that they were of the forty crores—but not a mere handful born in India, and proud of their birth—were equal in the eye of the law. On the strength of merit, intellectual capacity, self-sacrifice, courage and incorruptibility, a Christian could be the chief minister without exhibiting greater merit than a Hindu or Muslim. Religion was a purely personal matter. He expected that what was true of the Indian Union was equally true of Pakistan. He asked his Christian brethren also not to take their Christianity, as it was interpreted in the West. There, they knew that they fought with one another, as never before. After all, Jesus was an Asiatic, depicted as wearing the Arabian flowing robe. Jesus was the essence of meekness. He hoped that the Indian Christians would express in their lives Jesus, the crucified of the Bible, and not as interpreted in the West with her blood-stained fingers. He had no desire to criticize the West. He knew and he valued the many virtues of the West. But he was bound to point out that Jesus of Asia was misrepresented in the West except in individuals.

Then he answered the question whether the minorities would have recognition, as religious minorities had. Thus, whether the Bengalis of Bihar, though a minority, would have recognition? This was a ticklish question. In his opinion, an Indian was a citizen of India, enjoying equal rights in every part of India. Therefore, a Bengali had every right in Bihar, as a Bihari. But, he wished to emphasize that a Bengali must merge in the Bihari. He must never be guilty of exploiting Biharis, or feeling a stranger, or behaving as a stranger in Bihar. If the speaker brought his Gujarat manners in Bengal and imposed himself on that province, he would expect the Bengalis to expel him. And he could not then claim the rights of an Indian, as against Bengalis. All rights flowed from duties, previously and duly performed. One thing he must stress, that, in both the dominions, the use of force for the assertion of rights should be eschewed altogether, if they were to make any progress. Thus, neither the Bengalis nor the Biharis could assert themselves at the point of the sword, nor could the Boundary Commission award similarly be changed. It was the first lesson to be learnt in a democratic independent India.

Their independence was only a fortnight old. Liberty never meant the licence to do anything at will. Independence meant voluntary restraint and discipline and voluntary acceptance of the rule of law in the making of which the whole of India had its hand through its elected representatives. The only force at the disposal of democracy was that of the public opinion. Satyagraha and civil disobedience and fasts had nothing in common with the use of force, veiled or open. But even these had only restricted use in democracy. The people could not even think of them, whilst the Governments were settling down and the communal distemper was still stalking from one province to another.

In his prayer address at Barasat on August 30, Gandhi said that this was Shaheed Saheb's constituency. He was, therefore, glad that he was invited to visit Barasat. He had noticed the absence of the Pakistan flag or the Muslim League flag. Why did not the Hindus of Barasat go out of their way to invite their Muslim brethren to fly the Pakistan flag, side by side with the Tricolour? That, however, never meant that the Muslims were to impose the Pakistan flag, or the League flag on the Hindus. He would apply the same rule, where the Muslims were in a majority. If a Hindu girl was in their midst, they would encourage the solitary girl to unfurl the Tricolour and recite Ramdhun. That was the sure sign of Hindu-Muslim friendship, which then would be capable of bearing the severest strain upon it. No doubt, they learnt the daily tale of family strife in the Punjab. It had become difficult for the Muslims to live in the East and the Hindus and Sikhs in the West. Was there to be a transfer of crores of population? The way to stem the tide of this savagery and this inhuman conduct was for the Hindus and the Muslims of the two divisions of Bengal to preserve their equanimity intact and to demonstrate by their unbreakable friendship the way for all the communities to live. The way of mutual strife and exclusiveness was the way to perdition and slavery. And if there was true heart friendship, he could not understand the objection of the Muslims, wherever they were in a majority, to be included in the Western Bengal, as in Murshidabad and Malda, or for the Hindu majority, to be included in Pakistan. This was a sign not of friendship, but of unworthy and mutual distrust.

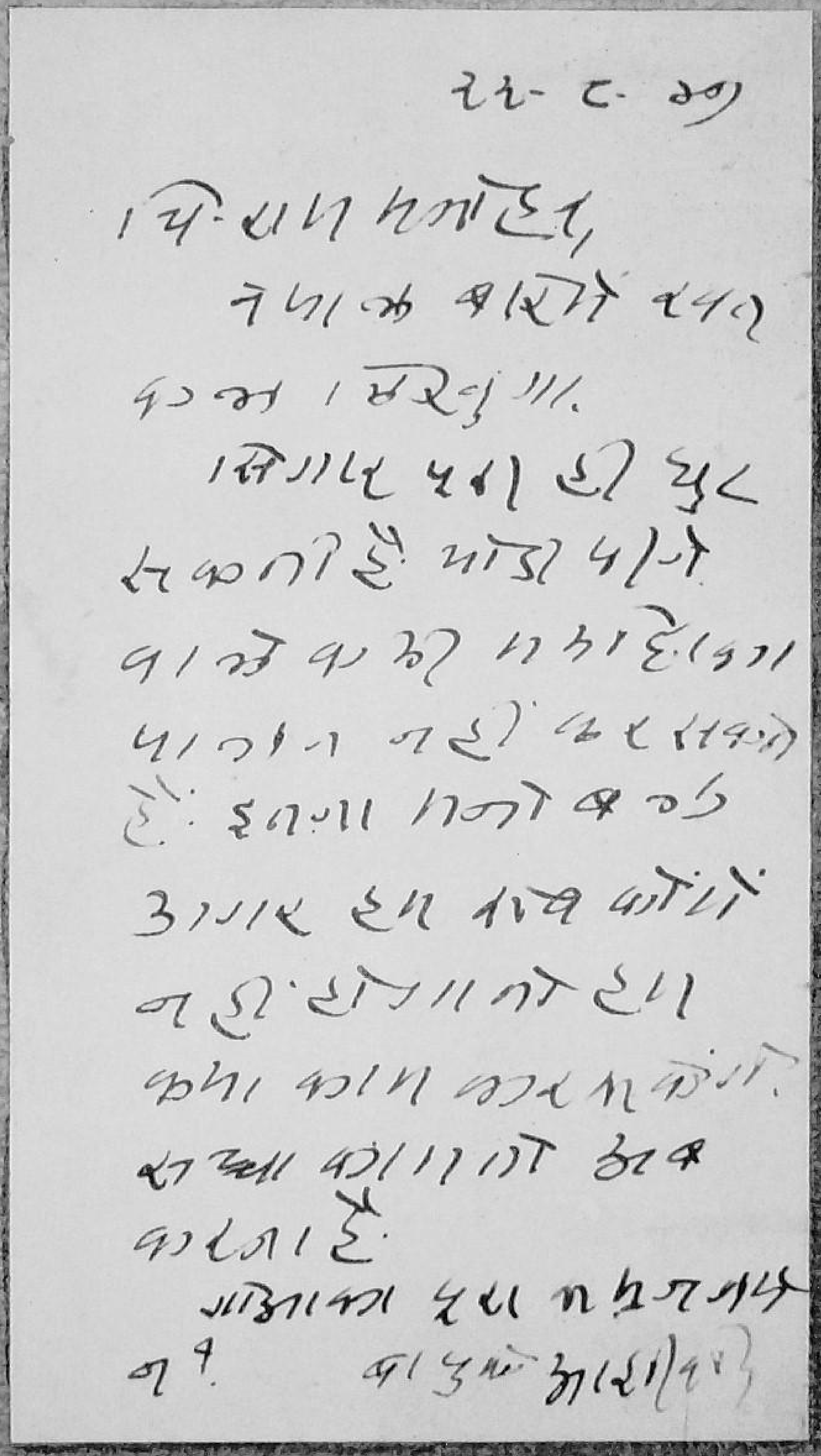
Although Calcutta was apparently quiet, Gandhi's mind was far from peaceful. After some hesitation, he decided to go to Noakhali


[illegible] – There can be no two opinions. The Union flag must go, Pakistan must be hoisted without demur with joy if possible. Award is award good or bad?

PARK CIRCUS
21-8-1947 Prayer meeting
1. Flag
2. [illegible]
3. Award
4. Pakistan[?]
+ effect in Calcutta
Punjab
Boycott
Landlords.
G. ~~said~~ drew attention to the flying of the joined flags of Pakistan and the Indian Union which was very prominently flown in the audience and hoped that pleasing sight would be universal in India. He was glad too that Shaheed Saheb had quoted the real [illegible] of the slogan Hindu Muslim bhai bhai. It was started

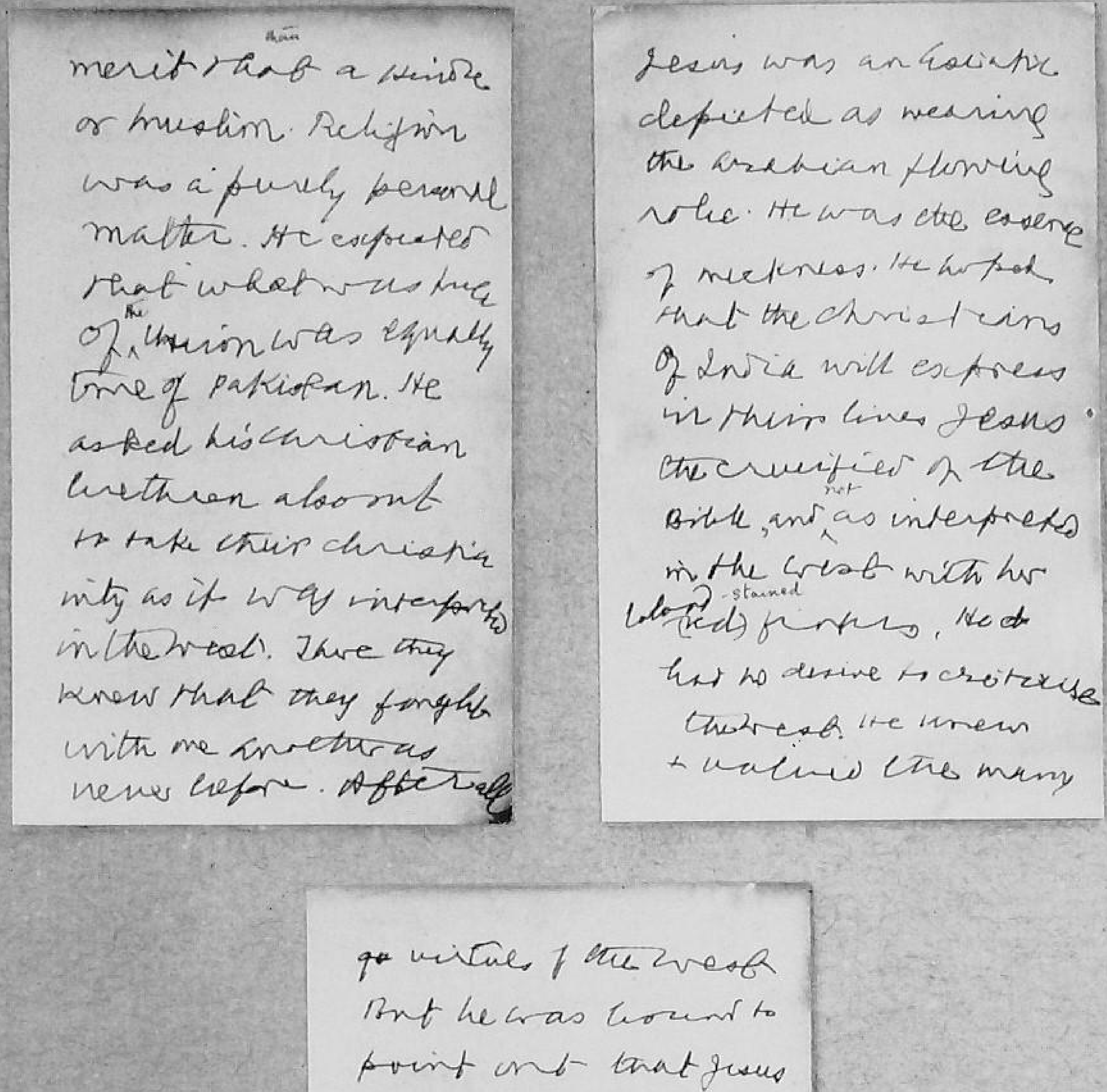
Courtesy : Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose

Report of Gandhi's prayer speech in his own handwriting, dated Calcutta, August 1947



Courtesy: Dr. Lohia

Gandhi's letter to Rammanohar Lohia, dated August 22, 1947

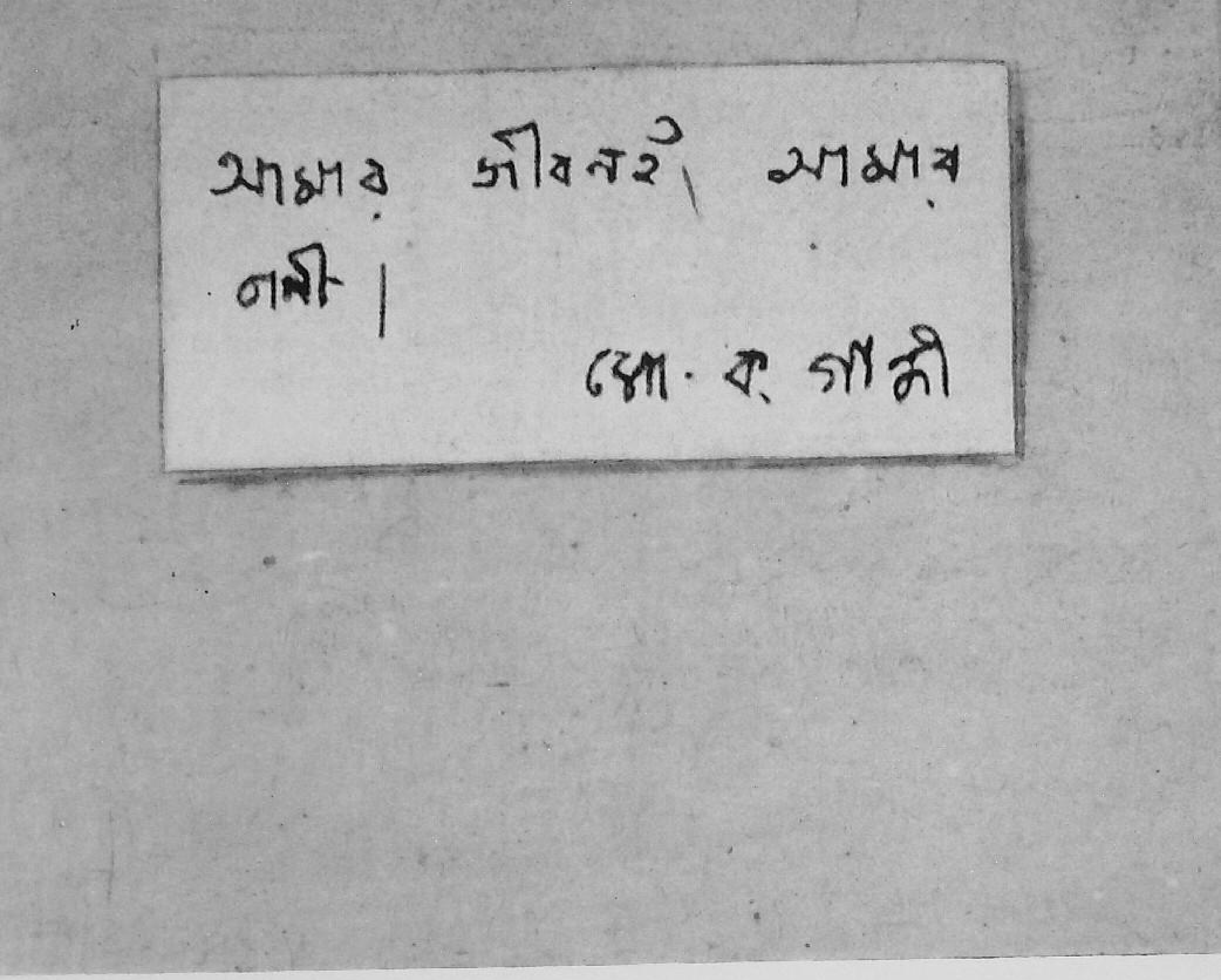

merit than a Hindu
or Muslim. Religion
was a purely personal
matter. He expected
that what was true
of the Union was equally
true of Pakistan. He
asked his Christian
brethren also not
to take their Christia-
nity as it was interpreted
in the West. There they
knew that they fought
with one another as
never before. After all

Jesus was an Asiatic
depicted as wearing
the Arabian flowing
robe. He was the essence
of meekness. He hoped
that the Christians
of India will express
in their lives Jesus
the crucified of the
Bible, and not as interpreted
in the West with his
blood-stained (red) fingers. He had
no desire to criticise
the West. He knew
& valued the many

virtues of the West
But he was bound to
point out that Jesus
of Asia was misrepre-
sented in the West
except in individuals.
Then he said answering
the question whether
the minorities would
have recognition as
religious minorities
etc. Thus whether
Bengalis of Bihar, though
a minority, would have

Courtesy: Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose

Gandhi's prayer speech on Jesus Christ, dated Calcutta, August 29, 1947



After a month's stay in Calcutta, on the eve of his departure for Delhi, September 7, 1947, Gandhi wrote down in Bengali: " My life is my message."

by the beginning of September. In the evening of August 31, there was a demonstration against his peace mission. "My resolve to go to Noakhali has collapsed after this evening's happenings," he said to Pyarelal when he saw him that night. "I cannot go to Noakhali or, for that matter, anywhere, when Calcutta is in flames. Today's incident to me is a sign and a warning from God. You have for the time being, therefore, to return to Noakhali, without me. You can tell the people of Noakhali that if my colleagues for any reason cannot be there, they will find me, surely, in their midst."

The next day, Monday, September 1, was his day of silence. Disturbing news continued to pour in. Several deputations waited on him during the day to consult him, as to what they should do to quench the fire. "Go in the midst of the rioters and prevent them from indulging in madness, or get killed in the attempt. But don't come back alive to report failure. The situation calls for sacrifice on the part of the top rankers. So far, the unknown, nameless, rank and file alone have been the victims of the holocaust with the one exception of the late Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. That is not enough."

Even as he uttered these words, he was cogitating within himself, as to where he came into the picture, which he was presenting to them. For, he added: "Of course, I cannot do today, what I have told them to do. I will not be permitted to. I noticed that yesterday. Everybody will protect me from harm, if I went in the midst of the maddened crowd. I may drop down from sheer physical exhaustion—that is nothing. It will not do for a soldier to be exhausted in the midst of battle." When C. Rajagopalachari, the Governor, saw him that night, his mind was already made up. "You don't expect me to approve of your proposed step," remarked Rajagopalachari, as he perused Gandhi's statement setting forth his reasons for going on a fast. Together, they took stock of the situation thrashing out the question in the minutest detail.

"Can you fast against the goondas?" argued Rajaji.

"The conflagration has been caused not by the goondas, but by those who have become goondas. It is we who make the goondas. Without our sympathy and passive support, the goondas would have no legs to stand upon. I want to touch the hearts of those who are behind the goondas," said Gandhi.

"But must you launch your fast at this stage? Why not wait and watch a little?" asked Rajaji.

Gandhi emphatically replied: "It would be too late afterwards. The minority Muslims cannot be left in a perilous state. My fast has to be preventive, if it is to be any good. I know that I shall be able to tackle the Punjab too, if I can control Calcutta. But if I falter now, then the conflagration may spread and soon, I can see clearly, two or three powers will be upon us and thus will end our shortlived dream of independence."

"But supposing you die, then the conflagration would be worse," said Rajaji.

"At least I won't be there to witness it," replied Gandhi. "I shall have done my bit. More is not given a man to do."

"But why add sour lemon juice to water, if you are to put yourself entirely in God's hands?" asked Rajaji, as he read that part of the statement where Gandhi had allowed himself that latitude.

"You are right," quickly replied Gandhi. "I have allowed it out of my weakness. It jarred on me even as I wrote it. A satyagrahi must hope to survive his conditional fast by a timely fulfilment of the condition."

And so the portion, referring to the addition of sour lime juice to water to be taken during the fast, was scored out and the fast commenced. This was on Monday night, September 1st. Gandhi's press statement said:

"I regret to have to report to you that, last night, some young men brought to the compound a bandaged man. He was reported to have been attacked by some Muslims. The Chief Minister had him examined and the report was that he had no marks of stabbing, which he was said to have received. The seriousness of the injury, however, is not the chief point. What I want to emphasize is that these young men tried to become judges and executioners.

"This was about 10 p.m., Calcutta time. The young men began to shout at the top of their voices. My sleep was disturbed, but I tried to lie quiet, not knowing what was happening. I heard the window-panes being smashed. I had lying, on either side of me, two very brave girls. They would not sleep but, without my knowledge, for my eyes were closed, they went among the small crowd and tried to pacify them. Thank God, the crowd did not do any harm to them. The old Muslim lady in the house endearingly called Bi Amma and a young Muslim stood near my matting, I suppose, to protect me from harm.

"The noise continued to swell. Some had entered the central hall and had begun to knock open the many doors. I felt that I must get up and face the angry crowd. I stood at the threshold of one of the doors. Friendly faces surrounded me and would not let me move forward. My vow of silence admitted of my breaking it on such occasions, and I broke it and began to appeal to the angry young men to be quiet. I asked the Bengali grand-daughter-in-law to translate my few words into Bengali. But all to no purpose. Their ears were closed against reason.

"I clasped my hands in the Hindu fashion. Nothing doing. More window-panes began to crack. The friendly ones in the crowd tried to pacify the crowd. There were police officers. Be it said to their credit that they did not try to exercise authority. They too clasped their hands in appeal. A lathi blow missed me and everybody round me. A brick aimed at me hurt one Muslim friend standing by. The two girls would not leave me and held on to me to the last. Meanwhile the police superintendent and his officers came in. They did not use force. They appealed to me to retire. Then there was a chance of their stilling the young men. After a time, the crowd melted.

"What happened outside the compound gate I do not know, except that the police had to use tear-gas to disperse the crowd. Meanwhile, Dr. P. C. Ghosh, Annada Babu and Dr. Nripen walked in and after some discussion left. Happily, Shaheed Saheb had gone home to prepare for tomorrow's proposed departure for Noakhali. In view of the above ugly incident, which no one could tell where it would lead to, I could not think of leaving Calcutta for Noakhali.

"What is the lesson of the incident? It is clear to me that if India is to retain her dearly won independence, all men and women must completely forget the lynch law. What was attempted was an indifferent imitation of it. If the Muslims misbehaved, the complainants could, if they would not go to the ministers, certainly go to me, or to my friend, Shaheed Saheb. The same thing applies to the Muslim complainants. There is no way of keeping the peace in Calcutta or elsewhere, if the elementary rule of civilized society is not observed. Let them not think of the savagery of the Punjab or outside India. The recognition of the golden rule of never taking the law into one's own hands has no exceptions.

"My secretary, Dev Prakash, wires from Patna: 'Public agitated over Punjab happenings. Feel statement necessary, impressing duty

of public and the press.' Shri Dev Prakash is never unduly agitated. There must be some unguarded word by the press. If that is so, at this time, when we are sitting on a powder magazine, the Fourth Estate has to be extra-wise and reticent. Unscrupulousness will act as a lighted match. I hope every editor and reporter will realize his duty to the full.

"One thing I must mention. I have an urgent message calling me to the Punjab. I hear all kinds of rumours about recrudescence of trouble in Calcutta. I hope they are exaggerated, if not quite baseless. The citizens of Calcutta have to reassure me that there would be nothing wrong in Calcutta and that peace, once restored, will not be broken.

"From the very first day of peace, that is, from August 14th last, I have been saying that the peace might only be a temporary lull. There was no miracle. Will the foreboding prove true and Calcutta again lapse into the law of the jungle? Let us hope not, let us pray to the Almighty that He will touch our hearts and will ward off the recurrence of insanity.

"Since the foregoing was written, about four o'clock, during my silence, I have come to know fairly well the details of what has happened in various parts of Calcutta. Some of the places, which were safe till yesterday, have now suddenly become unsafe. Several deaths have taken place. I saw two bodies of very poor Muslims and I saw also some wretched-looking Muslims being carted away to a place of safety. I quite see that the last night's incidents, so fully described above, pale into insignificance before this flare-up. Nothing that I may do in the way of going about in the open conflagration could possibly arrest it.

"I have told the friends, who saw me in the evening, what their duty is. What part am I to play, in order to stop it? The Sikhs and the Hindus must not forget what the East Punjab has done during these few days. Now the Muslims in the West Punjab too have begun the mad career. It is said that the Sikhs and the Hindus are enraged over the Punjab happenings.

"I have adverted above to a very urgent call for me to go to the Punjab. But now, that the Calcutta bubble seems to have burst, with what face can I proceed to the Punjab? The weapon which has hitherto proved infallible for me is fasting. To put an appearance before an yelling crowd does not always work. It certainly did not

work last night. What my word in person cannot do, my fast may. It may touch the hearts of all the warring elements in the Punjab, if it does in Calcutta. I, therefore, begin fasting from 8.15 tonight, to end only if and when sanity returns to Calcutta. I shall as usual, permit myself to add salt and soda bicarb to the water I may wish to drink during the fast.

"If the people of Calcutta wish me to proceed to the Punjab and help the people there, they have to enable me to break the fast, as early as may be."

Gandhi went to bed just after midnight and rose at half past three as usual. The prayers were held at four in the morning. Then he attended to his correspondence and later in the morning he read the papers, lying in bed. During the day, he received several reports of the incidents in the city and he sent out members of his party to see things on the spot.

"As soon as the condition returns to normal, as it was two days back, I shall break my fast—and not before that," asserted Gandhi to Dr. Shyama Prosad Mookerjee who, along with other Mahasabha leaders, called on him on Tuesday afternoon.

In the course of discussion with his close associates, Gandhi said: "With the fratricidal strife going on in various parts of India, I was thinking seriously of my duties. I was groping in the dark. At last, I have seen light. If Providence so desires, I would rather dedicate my life, than live to see this fair land besmeared with the blood of Hindus and Muslims."

Gandhi, who completed twenty-four hours of his fast on Tuesday night, had been resting most of the time, being unable to carry on with his usual activities. He looked a bit tired and he spoke rather slowly. Otherwise, the general condition was good. He went to bed at eight in the night and soon fell asleep.

On Wednesday, a leading member of the Calcutta Muslim League waited on him and pleaded with him to give up the fast: "Your very presence in our midst is an asset to us. It is the guarantee of our safety. Do not deprive us of it."

"My presence did not check the rowdies the other day," Gandhi pointed out. "My word seemed to have lost all its efficacy, so far as they were concerned. My fast will now be broken, only when the conflagration ends and the pristine peace of the last fifteen days returns. If the Muslims really love me and regard me as an asset, they

can demonstrate their faith by refusing to give way to the instinct of revenge and retaliation, even if the whole of Calcutta goes mad. In the meantime, my ordeal must continue."

The fast stirred the people. Sachin Mitra and Smritish Banerji got killed, while leading peace squadrons in the city.

The riots rapidly subsided. On September 4, the Government and the individuals reported to Gandhi that not one incident had taken place during the last twenty-four hours. People came to him, either with reports or with a promise, and in spite of his very weak state, he insisted on speaking in his feeble voice to every interviewer. Dr. Sunil Bose came to Gandhi with a request, that he should take rest and should not talk at all. But Gandhi told him that he could not exclude relevant talks. Such necessary loss of energy was inevitable. He was certainly desirous of living, but not at the cost of work that duty demanded. "I cannot interrupt the work which has made me fast and which makes me live. If my life ebbs away in the process, I would feel happy."

Residents of Beliaghata, who had a few weeks earlier looked upon Gandhi's peace mission with suspicion, had been electrified by the fast. They, with all their energy, set about the task of rehabilitating the deserted Muslim *basti*. The pressmen, who had met the evacuees who had returned home, testified to the sincerity and the solicitude with which those who had driven them away a few weeks back now treated them. All this was good news for Gandhi, but yet he did not reach the point, when the fast could be broken.

As the hours crept by and, drop by drop, strength ebbed out of him, the Hindus and the Muslims combined in an all-out effort to save the precious life. Mixed processions, consisting of all communities, issued forth and paraded through the riot-affected areas to restore communal harmony. A group of about fifty people, credited with the power to control the turbulent elements in the city, met Gandhi on the 4th, and they gave an undertaking that they would immediately bring the trouble-makers under check. They assured him that they had already traced and put under restraint the ring leaders, who had organized the rowdyism in his camp on Sunday last, including the man who had hurled the stick that had narrowly missed hitting him. They would all surrender themselves to him and they would take whatever punishment might be meted out to them. Would not he, on the strength of that assurance, now break his fast? If not, what

was his condition for breaking the fast? In reply, Gandhi told them that he would break his fast, only when they could assure him that there would never again be recrudescence of communal madness in Calcutta, even though the whole of West Bengal and, for that matter, India might go forth into a blaze and the Muslims themselves would come and tell him that they now felt safe and secure and, therefore, need not further prolong his fast. He did not expect to be able to control all the goondas in the city, though he would love to, as he had not the requisite degree of purity, the detachment and the steadfastness of mind. But if he could not even make them purge themselves of this communal virus, he would feel that life was not worth living and that he would not care to prolong it. They had referred to the oppression of his fast. He could not understand that. Why should they have a feeling of oppression, if what they had told him came right from their hearts? If a single step was taken under pressure of the fast, not from conviction, then it would cause oppression; but there should be no oppression, if there was complete co-operation between the head and the heart.

He said in conclusion: "The function of my fast is to purify, to release our energies by overcoming our inertia and mental sluggishness, not to paralyse us, or to render us inactive. My fast isolates the forces of evil. The moment they are isolated they die, for evil by itself has no legs to stand upon. And I expect you, therefore, to work with even greater vigour under the instigation of my fast, not to feel its oppression."

The deputation went back, realizing that it was not fair to request him to give up his fast, unless they could deliver the goods. Later, in the afternoon, a number of those who had led the disturbances in his camp on Sunday night, came to him and made their surrender with what to all intents appeared to be genuine repentance.

Towards evening, Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Mr. D. N. Mookerjee, its secretary, Sirdar Niranjan Singh Talib, the editor of *Desh Darpan*, Dr. G. Jilani of the Muslim League, Dr. Abdur Rashid Chowdhury and Mr. Mohibur Rahman of the Pakistan Seamen's Union came to report on the quiet and with their request to Gandhi to break his fast. Rajagopalachari, the Governor of West Bengal, Acharya Kripalani, Dr. P. C. Ghosh and Mr. Suhrawardy were also there. They had a long discussion with Gandhi, which left him rather worn out.

He said that ever since August 14th, although he had relished the fraternization between the Hindus and Muslims, he looked on the ebullition of emotion with caution and reserve. If the feeling was entirely due to friendship new found, to sense of brotherhood through common citizenship newly attained, there would be more signs of it, in intensified efforts for rehabilitation. That sign was lacking. The recrudescence had then come. Therefore, he felt he must fast. God had at least given him the capacity to work and die for communal peace. If there were anti-social elements in society, where a rowdy or a goonda plundered or killed a man, whether Hindu or Muslim, his fast might not affect him. He knew his limitations. He fasted for the restoration of communal harmony. The sanity that had been in evidence for the last twenty-four hours was not enough for him. If the present company could assure him that it was a sincere affair and was going to be permanent, he would expect them to give him something in writing. It must state that supposing Hindu-Muslim riots broke out once more in Calcutta, they should assure him that they would give their lives in the attempt to quell the riots. If they agreed, that would be enough. They must so work from tomorrow, that real peace and common citizenship was created as a feature of the Calcutta life, no matter what happened elsewhere. Communal peace should be their prime occupation. Their other occupations or avocations must henceforth occupy a second place.

There was another matter, but that was a condition which automatically attached itself to the situation. As in Bihar, as in Noakhali, so also in Calcutta, he wanted to tell the friends who were making themselves responsible for the break of his fast, that if the communal frenzy broke out in Calcutta again, he might have to undergo an irrevocable fast. The present fast was meant to activate the better, peace-loving and wise elements in society, to rescue them from the mental sluggishness and make goodness active.

He asked them two questions. Could they in all sincerity assure him that there would never be any more recrudescence of communal madness in Calcutta? Could they say that there was a genuine change of heart among the citizens of Calcutta, so that they would no longer foster or tolerate communal frenzy? They should allow him continue his fast, if they could not give him that guarantee, for in the event of the present communal outbreak being followed by another, he would have to undertake an irrevocable fast unto death.

"But, supposing, there is another communal outbreak, in spite of your assurances, since you are not omniscient," he resumed, "would you give your word of honour that you would in that event suffer to the uttermost before a hair of the minority community is injured, that you would die in the attempt to put out the conflagration, but not return alive to report failure? I want this from you in writing. But mind you, my blood will be upon your head, if you say one thing and mean another; rather than thoughtlessly hurry, let me prolong my fast a little longer. The fast won't hurt me. When a man fasts, it is not the gallons of water he drinks that sustains him, but God."

Gandhi spoke with deep passion. A pin-drop silence followed. Mr. Suhrawardy broke the ice. Gandhi had said that he would break the fast, when Calcutta would return to sanity. That condition had been fulfilled. Was he not imposing fresh conditions by asking them to sign that declaration? To this legal argument, Gandhi retorted that there was no fresh condition imposed. All that was there implied in the original terms of the fast. "What I have spoken now is only a home truth, to make you know, what is what. If there is a complete accord between your conviction and feeling, there should be no difficulty in signing that declaration. It is the acid test of your sincerity and courage of conviction. If, however, you sign it merely to keep me alive, you will be encompassing my death."

Everybody realized the solemnity of the warning. Kripalani and Rajagopalachari, who had arrived during the latter part of the discussion, proposed that Gandhi should be left alone for a while and they should retire to the adjoining room to confer together. Suhrawardy endorsed the suggestion. They were about to retire, when an appeal signed by about forty representatives of the Hindus and the Muslims was brought in. In the appeal, the signatories swore that they would not allow any untoward event or incident in that locality, which was affected during the previous riots and they earnestly prayed to Gandhi to break his fast. "So our effort has not been in vain," remarked Mr. Suhrawardy, as he read out the appeal. "Yes, the leaven is at work," Gandhi added.

Mr. Suhrawardy continued: "Now that even the Muslims have joined in the appeal, will you not break your fast? This shows that the Muslims have fully accepted your peace mission, though they are the aggrieved party in the present riots. It is all the more strange,

because, at one time, they looked upon you as the arch enemy. But their hearts have been so touched by the services you have rendered them, that today they acclaim you as their friend and helper."

Rajagopalachari quickly added: "If I may vary the language, I would say that he is safer today in the hands of the Muslims, than those of the Hindus."

Gandhi now picked out for his comments only the portion of Mr. Suhrawardy's remarks, in which he had referred to the Muslims as the aggrieved party. "Do not think of the Muslims as the aggrieved party," he remarked. "The essence of our present peace mission is that we are to forget the past. I do not want the Muslims to feel that in West Bengal, they are the under dog. Unless we can forget the distinction, we will not have done solid work."

They then all retired to the next room and Gandhi, who had an attack of weakness and nausea during the latter part of the talk, was left alone to rest.

The discussion was brief but unhurried. Rajagopalachari drafted the pledge, which was signed by Messrs. N. C. Chatterjee, Devendra Nath Mukerjee, S. Suhrawardy, R. K. Jaidka and Niranjan Singh Talib, to be followed later by others. A car-load of handgrenades and arms had in the meantime arrived to be surrendered to Gandhi as a token of repentance, on the part of those who had taken part in the reprisals and counter reprisals. Without any loss of time, the signatories then returned to Gandhi with the document.

"But is it any good my signing this document?" Mr. Suhrawardy asked. "I may any time be called to Pakistan and then what happens to my pledge?"

"You must in that event have confidence that those whom you leave behind will deliver the goods," remarked Gandhi. "Moreover, you can come back."

"I have no desire to hoodwink you, and will never deliberately do so," said Mr. Suhrawardy.

"I will break this fast now," said Gandhi, "and leave for the Punjab tomorrow. I shall now go there with far greater strength and confidence, than I could have three days back."

Mr. Suhrawardy interposed: "You cannot leave tomorrow. For your presence is necessary here at least for a couple of days yet, to consolidate the peace." All others supported him. So, Saturday was provisionally fixed for Gandhi's departure.

At quarter past nine on Thursday, September 4, Gandhi broke his fast. The fast lasted seventy-three hours.

On September 5 he was too weak to address the prayer meeting but on the following day he attended a farewell function, arranged on behalf of the citizens of Calcutta, to express their gratitude.

Gandhi, referring to the deputy mayor's speech, stated that the word "farewell" was misapplied. He had made his home in Calcutta among the Muslim friends in Beliaghata and not in Sodepur Khadi Pratisthan, which was his permanent home. He did not even allow Hemaprobha Devi and her co-workers to come to his new abode for looking after him. He said that he would be satisfied with what the Muslim friends gave him in the shape of service. He had made no mistake. He was in the habit of living comfortably in the Muslim homes in South Africa.

He then spoke on the martyrdom of Sachin Mitra and Smritish Banerji. He was not sorry. Such innocent deaths were necessary to keep the two communities together. Let them not make the mistake that such martyrs were to be found among the Hindus only. He could cite several instances of Muslims, who had lost their lives in the act of protecting Hindus. He had similar personal experiences in life. There was evil and good among all communities and climes. That brought him to Shaheed Saheb, about whom he had many Hindus coming to him, and many letters from them, to the effect that he was a fool to have accepted Shaheed Saheb as his associate in the task. He must say that he was no fool. He knew what he was doing. He had nothing to do with what Shaheed Saheb had done in the past. But he was there to testify that Shaheed Suhrawardy had given his full co-operation all the precious days they were together. He was free to confess that without Shaheed Saheb's valuable help, they would not have found him working in their midst. It was an insult to his intelligence to think, that there could be any base motive behind the work into which he had thrown himself with his whole heart. Shaheed Saheb had a palatial house and had a brother whom he regarded as superior to him in talent. He had another whom the speaker had the pleasure of knowing in London at the Round Table Conference and who was the Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University. His uncle Sir Abdulla was the author of *The Sayings of the Prophet.* If they distrusted the motives, they would be vastly mistaken. Neither they, nor anybody else, had any right to

question a man's motives. The speaker would not like his motives to be judged against his action to the contrary. That was the only right way to get on with the people. They should know that he had been condemned to their knowledge, as the enemy number one of Islam and that, in spite of his protestations to the contrary. Would the audience, therefore, like the Muslims never to accept his actions at their worth?

Let them consider the awful consequences of such a distrust. It might ruin the present unity and thus jeopardize what probably was the only chance of saving the Punjab from fratricidal strife.

He then referred to the Shanti Sena and the other organizations which were doing strenuous work to preserve peace. Women had come forward to do their bit. The students had excelled themselves in their devotion to the cause of communal amity. Some young men had brought their unlicensed arms, including the Sten guns, hand-grenades and other less destructive weapons. He thanked them all for their courage in bringing them to him. He hoped that the good example would be copied by the possessors, Hindus and Muslims, of unlicensed arms. It would be a proof of mutual trust and trust in God. He was assured by the chief minister that those who delivered up such arms within a given period—the shorter the better—would be thanked for their open help in the work of peace and that no punishment would be inflicted on them, now or hereafter, for what was undoubtedly a serious offence. The speaker asked, therefore, all such possessors to deliver these to the authorities or to their friends, to be delivered to the authorities.

Lastly, he told them that by breaking the fast, only after one day's absence of strife, on the strength of the pressure of friends, drawn from all communities in Calcutta and outside, he threw the burden on them of preservation of peace at the cost of their lives. Let them not be guilty of having, though unwittingly, brought about his death by the abrupt end of the fast. He could have, as they might have, waited for some days more to enable him to gauge the situation for himself; but he could not properly do so in the face of the earnestness of friends, say, like Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Shaheed Saheb and others, too numerous to mention, but he threw all the greater weight on the shoulders of all Calcutta citizens and sojourners. What they wanted was not the peace imposed by the Government forces, but by themselves. If

unfortunately it was broken, there would be no alternative but a fast unto death. He could not, like a child, play with them, and each time say, he was going to break it, if they resumed sanity. He made that solemn declaration for Bihar, for Noakhali, and now for Calcutta. As his life was made, he had no other alternative. If God willed that he should still do some service, He would bless all with wisdom to do the right thing in the matter. Consider the consequence of the city of Calcutta remaining sane. It must mean the automatic sanity of all Bengal, East and West. It meant also Bihar and consequently the Punjab, where God was sending him, and if the Punjab came to its senses, the rest of India was bound to follow. So may God help them all.

Muslim League paper *Morning News*, paying tribute to Gandhi on behalf of the Calcutta Muslims, wrote: "He was ready to die, so they might live peacefully." And the correspondent of *The Times* summed up the situation by the remark that Gandhi had achieved more than would have been effected by several divisions of troops.

"Gandhiji has achieved many things," stated Rajagopalachari, "but there has been nothing, not even independence, which is so truly wonderful, as his victory over evil in Calcutta."

Gandhi left for Delhi on September 7. He was in Calcutta exactly thirty days and in his Beliaghata residence twenty-four days. When Gandhi was approached for a message he wrote down in Bengali: "My life is my message."

Man Proposes, God Disposes

1947

When Gandhi reached Delhi on the morning of September 9, 1947, he was shocked to hear about the riots in the capital and issued the following statement:

"'Man proposes, God disposes' has come true often enough in my lifetime, as it must have done in many others. I knew nothing about the sad state of things in Delhi, when I left Calcutta on Sunday last. On reaching Delhi, I have been listening, the whole day long, to the tale of woe, that is Delhi today. I saw several Muslim friends, who recited their pathetic story. I heard enough to warn me that I must not leave Delhi for the Punjab, until it had regained its former self.

"I must do my little bit to calm the heated atmosphere. I must apply the old formula 'Do or Die' to the capital of India. I am glad to be able to say that the residents of Delhi do not want the senseless destruction that is going on. I am prepared to understand the anger of the refugees whom fate has driven from West Punjab. But anger is short madness. It can only make matters worse, in every way. Retaliation is no remedy. It makes the original disease much worse. I, therefore, ask all those, who are engaged in the senseless murders, arson and loot, to stay their hands.

"The Central Government, the ablest, the most courageous and the most self-sacrificing team that the Union could produce, have not been in the saddle for even a month, after the declaration of Indian independence. It is criminal and suicidal not to give them a chance to set the house in order. I am fully aware of the shortage of food. Mob rule is dislocating everything, making distribution of foodstuffs all but impossible. May God restore peace to distracted Delhi.

"I would close with the hope that Calcutta will fulfil the promise, made on my departure, and which sustains me in the midst of the surrounding madness."

Describing the situation in Delhi as "a very serious crisis", Prime Minister Nehru said in a broadcast speech:

"I have little doubt that, in a military or a police sense, we shall overcome it soon. Indeed, the military are still masters of the situation and they will be still more masters very soon. Of that, I have little doubt. But, surely, we are not going to live in India just with the help of the military without any self-restraint and to desist from the evil deeds just because of what the police or the military might do to us.

"During the last three weeks, I have wandered about West Punjab and East Punjab and my mind is full with the horror of the things that I saw and that I heard. During these last few days in the Punjab and in Delhi, I have supped my fill of horror. That, indeed, is the only feast that we can have now . . .

"This morning our leader, our master, Mahatma Gandhi, came to Delhi, and I went to see him and I sat by his side, for a while, and wondered how low we had fallen from the great ideals that he had placed before us.

"I go to the country-side, and people with spikes and all sort of destructive weapons, when they see me, shout 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai', 'Jawaharlal-ki-jai'. I feel ashamed to hear these cries from these people, who might have committed murder, loot and arson, in the name of Mahatma Gandhi. It is not by shouting slogans that they will wash off the evil deeds, that they have done. And even we will not get over these evil deeds by just honouring the Mahatma in name, and not following what he had told us all these long years.

"What is happening now is something directly inimical, and so directly opposed to these ideals. The very thought of it shames me, and makes me sometimes doubt, if all the good work that we have done in these many years is not going to bear fruit at all. And yet that doubt cannot remain for long. For I do believe that good work must bear good results, just as, I do believe, that evil must bear evil consequences.

"There has been enough of evil work in this country. Let us put an end to it, and start good work, and try to follow the great lessons that the Mahatma has taught us."

On September 10, Gandhi made a forty-mile tour and visited the refugee centres in Delhi and at Okhla. At the prayer meeting he delivered a soul-stirring speech, which was broadcast to the nation.

He said that when he reached Shahadra station, he found Sardar Patel, Rajkumari Kaur and others to receive him. But he missed the usual smile on the Sardar's lips and his apt jokes. The police and the public, whom he met on alighting from the train, reflected the gloom he noticed around him. Had jovial Delhi suddenly become a city of the dead? Yet another surprise was in store for him. He was taken not to Bhangi Colony, where he delighted to stay, but to the palatial Birla House. Though the cause of it hurt him, he was glad to find himself in the house, where he had often stayed before. Whether he stayed among the Valmiki brethren or in the Birla House, he was the guest of the Birla brothers. Their men looked after him in the Bhangi Colony with single-minded devotion. The cause of the change was not the Sardar. He could never be guilty of weakness, so as to fear for his safety in the Valmiki Colony. It was his delight to live in the midst of bhangis, though, through the New Delhi committee's fault, he could not live actually in the houses, in which the bhangis were packed like sardines.

The cause of the change, this time, was the fact that the premises he occupied were being used for the refugees, whose need was infinitely greater than his. Was it not to their shame, as a nation, that there should be any refugee problem at all? Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, Liaquat Saheb and other Pakistan leaders had proclaimed in common with Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel that the minorities would be treated in the respective dominions with the same consideration as the majorities. Was it said by each to tickle the world with sweet words, or was it meant to show the world that we meant what we had said and that we would die in the attempt to redeem the word. If so, he asked, why were the Hindus and the Sikhs and the proud Amils and the Bhaibunds driven to leave Pakistan, which was their home? What had happened in Quetta, Nawabshah and Karachi? The tales that one heard and read from the Western Pakistan were heart-breaking. It would not do for either party to plead helplessness and say that it was the work of the goondas. Each dominion was bound to take full responsibility for the acts of those who were living in either dominion. "Theirs was not to reason why, theirs was but to do and die." No longer did they work willynilly under the crushing weight of imperialism. But it could never mean that there was now to be no rule of law, if they were to face the world squarely in the face. Were the Union ministers to declare their bankruptcy

and shamelessly own to the world that the people of Delhi or the refugees would not cheerfully and voluntarily obey the rule of law? He would like the ministers to break in the attempt to wean the people from their madness, rather than bend.

Gandhi's voice was very low throughout, but he went on to give an exhaustive account of his tour through Delhi, which looked like a city of the dead. He incidentally said that even in the house he lived in, there was neither fruit, nor vegetables, to be had. Was it not a shame that no vegetables were to be had in Subzi Mandi, because some Muslims had opened fire with a machine-gun and otherwise? In his wandering, he heard complaints that the refugees were without rations. What was issued was not worth eating. If the fault was of the administration, it was equally of the refugees, who had paralysed even necessary activities. Why did they not realize that they harmed themselves? If they trusted the Government to secure redress for all their legitimate grievances and acted as law-abiding citizens, he knew, as they should know, that most of their difficulties would be over.

He had paid a visit to the Meo Refugee Camp near Humayun Tomb. The refugees said that they were driven out from Alwar and Bharatpur states. He was told that they had no food, save what was sent to them by Muslim friends. He knew that the Meos were easily excitable and could cause trouble. The remedy was certainly not to pack them off to Pakistan, unless they wanted to go there, but to treat them as fellow human beings, demanding treatment for their weaknesses, like any other disease.

He had gone to Jamia Millia, in whose shaping he had played a vital part. Dr. Zakir Husain was his dear friend. The doctor described his experiences certainly in sorrow, but without bitterness. A short time ago, he had to go to Jullundur. He would have been done to death by the angry Sikhs for the crime of being a Muslim but for the timely aid of a Sikh captain and a Hindu railway employee. He gratefully related this experience. Imagine the fact that this national institution, where several Hindus had studied, was in fear of receiving attention from angered refugees and their abetters. The speaker saw over hundred refugees accommodated somehow in the Jamia Millia premises. He hung his head in shame as he heard the sorry recital of the refugees' difficulties. He then went to the Dewan Hall refugee camp, Wavell Canteen Camp and Kingsway.

He met there the Sikh and the Hindu refugees. They could not quite forget his past services to the Punjab. But some pardonably angry faces were in all these refugee camps. He was accused of hardness of heart towards the Hindus. He had not suffered, as they had. He had not lost his dear ones, as they had, nor had he, like them, been rendered homeless and penniless. How could he console them by saying that he had stayed in Delhi to do what he could in assisting to make the capital of India return to normality? He could not bring back the dead ones. But death was a blessing bestowed by the Creator on all life, human and sub-human. The difference lay in the time and the manner. Right conduct was the only right way of life, which made it bearable and even lovely.

A Sikh friend had seen him during the day. He said that though he was born a Sikh, he could not claim to be one in the light of the Granth Saheb. The speaker asked him, whether he knew any such claimant. The friend could not think of any. The speaker quietly put in his own claim. He claimed to be attempting to live as a Sikh, in terms of the Granth Saheb. Time was, when in the Nankana Saheb, he was accepted as a true friend of the Sikhs. Guru Nanak made no distinction between a Muslim and a Hindu. And for him, the whole humanity was one. Such was his own Sanatan Hindu Dharma. As such, he claimed also to be a Muslim. He recited the great Muslim prayer on the oneness of God and His all-protecting power.

He asked the refugees to live truly, fearlessly and at the same time without malice or hatred towards anyone. Let them not throw away the golden apple of dearly won freedom, by hasty and thoughtless action in the moment of anger.

He went round the hospitals and refugee camps, giving consolation to the distressed people. On September 12, he visited the camp at Jumma Masjid, where 30,000 Muslim refugees—men, women and children—were lodged. They all greeted him with folded hands and unburdened their hearts. In Purana Quila, 50,000 Muslim refugees were sheltered. On the Ridge and the Idgah, thousands of Muslims were accommodated in tents. In other parts of Delhi were lodged thousands of Hindus, who had to leave their homes in West Punjab. The world's biggest convoy consisting of eight lakhs of non-Muslim refugees from West Punjab had left on foot for East Punjab. Intense anxiety and suspicion was in the air. Gandhi tried to combat the evil effects through his prayer speeches.

On September 12, Gandhi began his prayer address by expressing his sorrow at the disturbing news that was coming through from the N.-W. Frontier Province. He knew that province well. For weeks, he had toured there and lived under the roof of the Khan brothers in perfect safety. It pained him beyond measure, therefore, to have been shown a telegram during the day from Girdhari Lal Puri, an ex-minister, saying that he and his wife, both good workers, should be rescued at once. Such news made him hang his head in shame, and it was up to the Government today in power and the Qaid-e-Azam to see to it that all the Hindus and the Sikhs were as safe there, as the Muslims.

While deploring the happenings in the N.-W. Frontier Province, however, Gandhi impressed on the audience that anger was not going to lead them anywhere. Anger bred revenge, and the spirit of revenge was today responsible for all the horrible happenings there and elsewhere. What good would it do the Muslims to avenge the happenings in Delhi, or for the Sikhs and the Hindus to avenge the cruelties on their co-religionists in the Frontier and West Punjab? If a man or a group of men went mad, should everyone follow suit? He warned the Hindus and the Sikhs that, by killing and looting and arson, they were destroying their own religions. He claimed to be a student of religion and knew that no religion ever taught madness. Islam was no exception. He implored them all to stop their insane actions at once: "Let not the future generations say that you lost the sweet bread of freedom, because you could not digest it. Remember that, unless you stop this madness, the name of India will be mud in the eyes of the world."

Gandhi spoke of his visit to the beautiful Jumma Masjid, second to no mosque in the world. It pained him to see Muslim men and women there in deep distress. He tried to comfort those sufferers by saying that death had to come to all. It was no good weeping for the dead. It would not bring back the dead. It was up to everyone to save the future of this great land. Many Muslim friends came to meet him daily. He advised them to state their position frankly and fully. He was sorry that the lives of Muslims should be in danger in Delhi or in any part of India. It was a big tragedy. He implored the refugees to listen to an old man, who had been through many experiences during his long life. He was absolutely convinced that to return evil for evil, led nowhere. To return good for good was

no virtue. The true way was to return good for evil. Many Muslim friends would like to help. But it was impossible to requisition their active services in Delhi today.

He appealed to the Sikhs, the Hindus and the Muslims to forget the past and not to dwell on their sufferings, but to extend the right hand of fellowship to each other, and to determine to live at peace with each other. Muslims must be proud to belong to the Indian Union, they must salute the Tricolour. If they were loyal to their religion, no Hindu could be their enemy. Similarly, the Hindus and the Sikhs must welcome the peace-loving Muslims in their midst. He had been told that the Muslims here were in possession of arms. They should surrender the arms at once and the Government here should take no action against them. The Hindus and Sikhs must do likewise. He had also been told that the West Punjab Government was arming the Muslims. If this was true, it was wholly wrong and would in the long run lead to their own destruction. It should cease forthwith. No one anywhere should have unlicensed arms.

Gandhi begged of them all to bring about peace quickly in Delhi, so that he might be able to proceed to both East and West Punjab. He had only one mission and his message was the same for everyone. Let it be said of them that the inhabitants of Delhi had gone mad temporarily, but that sanity had now returned. Let them allow their Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to hold up their heads again. Today, they were bowed in shame and sorrow. They had a priceless heritage. Let them remember that it was a joint one. It was their duty to guard it and keep it unsullied.

On September 13th, Gandhi referred to the days in 1915, when he lived under the late Principal Rudra's roof. He was as staunch a Christian, as he was a son of India. It was he who brought the speaker in contact with the late Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari, both of whom looked upon Hindus, Muslims and other Indians with even affection and regard. He knew that thousands of poor Hindus received free treatment from Hakim Saheb. He was without doubt the loved sardar of all Delhi. Were these men to be classed as unworthy? It was a matter of shame that Dr. Ansari's daughter, Zohra, and her husband, Dr. Shaukatullah Khan, should have to abandon their home and live in a hotel for fear of the Hindus and Sikhs. He was free to confess that he would lose all interest in life, if Muslims who had produced such men, could not live with perfect safety in

the Union. It was suggested to him that the Muslims were all fifth-columnists in the Union. He declined to believe in that sweeping condemnation. There were four and a half crores of Muslims in the Union. If they were all so bad, they would dig the grave of Islam. The Qaid-e-Azam had asked the Muslims of the Union to be loyal to it. Let people trust their Government to deal with traitors. They must not take the law into their own hands.

Gandhi then reported to the audience that he was able to visit only one refugee camp and that in the Old Fort. It contained many Muslim refugees. As his car passed through the crowd, many more refugees seemed to be coming. Though the crowd was very large, he insisted on saying a few words of cheer to the refugees. He urged them to be calm and shed anger. He said that God was the refuge of all, and not man, however highly placed he may be. God would make right, what man spoiled. On his part, he promised not to rest, till peace again ruled Delhi, as it did before many men of both the communities had gone mad.

During day he had seen many Muslim and Hindu friends. It was the same sad tale of woe, whether recited by the Hindu sufferers or the Muslims. It was a shame for both. He claimed to be the equal servant of all. He wished, they could unitedly make up their minds that transfer of population was a fatal snare. It meant nothing, but greater misery. The solution lay in both living in peace and friendship in their own original homes. It would be madness to make the present estrangement into permanent enmity. It was the bounden duty of each dominion to guarantee full protection to their minorities. Let the two thrash the question out among themselves or, if need be, fight it out and make of themselves the laughing-stock of the world.

He missed, therefore, in the Qaid-e-Azam's fervent appeal for the funds for Muslim evacuees from the Indian Union, any reference to the misdeeds of the Muslims in Pakistan. He pleaded for a frank and bold acknowledgement by the respective governments of the misdeeds of their majorities.

Lastly, he wished to refer to a vague insinuation against Asaf Ali Saheb, their ambassador in America. Asaf Ali had been a Congressman, ever since the speaker had known him. He had been a friend of the late Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari, as he was of the Maulana Saheb, who was Congress President for many years and had always

been known as a staunch nationalist. He knew that Asaf Ali Saheb was not recalled from America, but that he had come to consult the Prime Minister on many important questions. It was a matter of shame that such Muslims should not feel at ease with every Hindu and Sikh. It was wrong that a single Muslim should feel unsafe in Delhi, India's capital.

On September 14, Gandhi told the prayer audience that he went to Muslim refugee camps in Idgah and opposite. No Muslim bore an angry look. They seemed to be poor. There was a very old man who was mere skin and bone. Every rib was to be seen. He was stabbed in several places. By his side was a woman equally injured. Though not so old, she was in a dilapidated condition. He hung his head in shame, when he saw them. For him, all men and women were the same, no matter what religion they professed.

Then he observed the insanitation of those refugee camps. They were filthy beyond description. In the Idgah, the tank was dry. He did not inquire where the refugees could get their water from. The inmates performed natural functions anyhow. If he was the camp commandant, and the military and the police were under him, he would take up the shovel and the pickaxe himself, ask the help of the military and the police to do likewise, and then ask the refugees to follow suit, so that the camps would be in a perfectly sanitary condition. As it was, the ground itself was a rubbish heap, on which no human being should be asked to live, before it was thoroughly cleaned out. It required no money, it required a little forethought and the possession of a sanitary sense, which would refuse to tolerate insanitation. The Hindu camps were no better on this score. Insanitation was a national defect, or, better still, a vice, of which, as a free nation, the sooner they got rid, the better it was for them.

From the refugee camps his thought turned to the cause of this dislocation on a scale which arrested the progress of the nation. Why were so many Hindus and Sikhs coming away from the Western Pakistan provinces? Was it a crime to be a Hindu or Sikh? Or were they coming away out of sheer cussedness? Or was it a punishment for what their confreres had done in the East? Then he thought of the Union. Why were the Muslims of Delhi frightened into leaving their homes? Had both the Governments broken down? Why did the populace ignore its Government? The Muslims had unlicensed arms. There was the Government to see to it that those arms were

taken away from the unlawful possessors. If they were incompetent, they were to give place to better men. The Government was what the people made it. It was wholly wrong and undemocratic for the individuals to take the law into their own hands. This lawlessness boded no good for India, whether it was rampant in Pakistan, or the Union. He was in Delhi to do or die. He had no desire to witness the mad fratricide, this national suicide, their betrayal of their own Government. May God help them to regain their lost sanity!

On Monday, September 15, the following message was read out, as it was Gandhi's day of silence:

"During the night, as I heard what should have been the soothing sound of gentle life-giving rain, my mind went out to the thousands of refugees, lying about in the open camps in Delhi. I was sleeping snugly in a verandah, protecting me on all sides. But for the cruel hand of man against his brother, these thousands of men, women and children would not be shelterless and in many cases foodless. In some places, they could not but be in knee-deep water. Was it all inevitable? The answer from within was an emphatic 'No'. Was this the first fruit of freedom, just a month old baby? These thoughts have haunted me throughout the last twenty hours. My silence has been a blessing. It has made me inquire within. Have the citizens of Delhi gone mad? Have they no humanity left in them? Have love of the country and its freedom no appeal for them? I must be pardoned for putting the first blame on the Hindus and the Sikhs. Could they not be men enough to stem the tide of hatred? I would urge the Muslims of Delhi to shed all fear, trust God and discover all the arms in their possession, which the Hindus and Sikhs fear they have. Not that the former too do not have any. The question here is one of degree only. Either the minority rely upon God and His creature man to do the right thing, or rely upon their fire-arms to defend themselves against those whom they must not trust.

"My advice is precise and firm. Its soundness is manifest. Trust your Government to defend every citizen against the wrongdoers, however well-armed they may be. Further, trust them to demand and get the damages for every member of the minority, wrongfully dispossessed. All that neither Government can do, is to resurrect the dead. The people of Delhi will make it difficult to demand justice from the Pakistan Government. Those who seek justice must do justice, must have clean hands. Let the Hindus and the Sikhs take the

right step and invite the Muslims, who have been driven out of their homes, to return. If they can take this courageous step, worthy from every point of view, they immediately reduce the refugee problem to its simplest terms. They will command recognition from Pakistan, nay, from the whole world. They will save Delhi and India from disgrace and ruin. For me, transfer of the millions of Hindus and Sikhs and Muslims is unthinkable. It is wrong. The wrong of Pakistan will be undone by the right of a resolute non-transfer of population. I hope I shall have the courage to stand by it, even though mine may be the solitary voice in its favour."

Addressing 500 members of the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh or R.S.S. at Bhangi Colony on the morning of the 16th, Gandhi said that he had visited R.S.S. camp years ago at Wardha, when the founder Shri Hedgewar was alive. He had been very well impressed by their discipline, complete absence of untouchability, rigorous simplicity. Since then, the sangh had grown. He was convinced that any organization which was inspired by the ideal of service and self-sacrifice was bound to grow in strength. But, in order to be truly useful, self-sacrifice had to be combined with purity of motive and true knowledge. Sacrifice without these two had been known to prove ruinous to society.

The prayer that was recited by the R.S.S., was in praise of Mother India, Hindu culture and Hindu religion. Gandhi claimed to be a sanatani Hindu. He took the root meaning of the word "sanatana". No one knew exactly the origin of the word "Hindu". The name was given to us and we had characteristically adopted it. Hinduism had absorbed the best of all the faiths of the world and in that sense Hinduism was not an exclusive religion. Hence, it could have no quarrel with Islam or its followers, as unfortunately was the case today. When the poison of untouchability entered Hinduism, the decline began. One thing was certain, and he had been proclaiming it from the house-tops, that if untouchability lived, Hinduism must die. Similarly, if the Hindus felt that in India there was no place for any one else except Hindus, and if non-Hindus, especially Muslims, wished to live here, they had to live as the slaves of the Hindus, they would kill Hinduism. And, similarly, if Pakistan believed that in Pakistan only the Muslims had a rightful place and non-Muslims had to live there on sufferance and as their slaves, it would be the death-knell of Islam in India.

It was an unfortunate fact that India had been divided into two parts. If one part went mad and did ugly deeds, was the other part to follow suit? There was no gain in returning evil for evil. Religion taught us to return good for evil.

He had seen their Guruji a few days ago. He had mentioned to him the various complaints about the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh that he had received in Calcutta and in Delhi. The Guruji had assured him that though he could not vouchsafe for the correct behaviour of every member of the sangh, the policy of the sangh was purely service of the Hindus and Hinduism and that too not at the cost of any one else. The Rashtriya Sevak Sangh did not believe in aggression. It did not believe in non-violence. It taught the art of self-defence. It never taught retaliation.

Today, the ship of India was passing through troubled waters. The leaders in charge of the Government were the best that India possessed. Some people were dissatisfied with them. He would ask them to produce better men, if they could, and he would advise the old guard to hand over the reins to their betters. After all, Sardar Patel was an old man, and Pandit Jawaharlal, though not old in years, looked old and haggard under the burden he was carrying. They were doing their utmost to serve the people, but they could only act according to their light. If the vast bulk of Hindus wanted to go in a particular direction, even though it might be wrong, no one could prevent them from doing so. But even a single individual had the right to raise his voice against it and give them a warning. That is what he was doing. He was told that he was the friend of the Muslims and the enemy of the Hindus and of the Sikhs. It was true, that he was a friend of the Muslims, as he was of the Parsis and others. In this respect, he was the same today, as he had been since the age of twelve. But those who called him the enemy of the Hindus and Sikhs did not know him. He could be enemy of none, much less of the Hindus and Sikhs.

If Pakistan persisted in wrongdoing, there was bound to be war between India and Pakistan. If he had his way, he would have no military, no police even. But all this was tall talk. He was not the Government. Why did not Pakistan plead with the Hindus and the Sikhs and ask them not to leave their homes and ensure their safety in every way? Why could not they in the Indian Union ensure the safety of every Muslim?

Today, both the parties appeared to have gone crazy. The result could be nothing but destruction and misery.

The Rashtriya Sevak Sangh was a well-organized, well-disciplined body. Its strength could be used in the interests of India, or against it. He did not know whether there was any truth in the allegations made against the sangh. It was for the sangh to show by their uniform behaviour, that the allegations were baseless.

On September 16 he had to abandon his evening prayer meeting which was held at a refugee camp, as a number of Sikh refugees started a demonstration against the recitation from the Koran. He stated that he was glad of the experience. He for one could not be deflected from the course that he had adopted. He must remain the friend of all communities of India. And he commended it to all the lovers of freedom.

On September 17, there was a mammoth gathering of the workmen of the Delhi Cloth Mills and others from outside, in the spacious courtyard of the Lines. Gandhi had gone there at the instance of the workmen who used to supply volunteers, whenever he stayed at the Valmiki Colony.

Gandhi said that, after his experience of last evening, he had decided not to offer public prayer, unless the whole audience, without exception, wished to have the prayer. He had never imposed anything on anyone, much less could he impose such a highly spiritual thing as prayer. The response must be from the heart. There could be no question of pleasing him. His prayer meetings had certainly become popular and lakhs of people seemed to have gained therefrom. But in these times of tension, he could understand the resentment of the sufferers. Only no one should expect him to omit that part of the prayer, which to one seemed objectionable. It had to be accepted heartily, as it was, or rejected. For him, the recitation from the Koran was an integral part of the prayer.

Turning to the burning question of the day, he observed that he was quite prepared to understand their resentment and the consequent impatience. But if they deserved their independence, they would learn to subdue their resentment and trust their Government to do the best. He was presenting to them not his own way of nonviolence, much as he would like to. But he knew that he was out of court today. He suggested to them the adoption of the path that all democratic nations had adopted. In democracy, the individual will

was governed and limited by the social will, which was the state, which was governed by and for democracy. If every individual took the law into his own hands, there was no state, it became anarchy, absence of social law or state. That way lay destruction of liberty. Therefore, they should subdue their anger and let the state secure justice. In his opinion, if they permitted the state to do its duty, he had no doubt that every Hindu and every Sikh refugee would return to his home with honour and dignity. He was free to admit that the refugees had suffered much in Pakistan, many homes had become desolate, lives had been lost, girls had been abducted, and there had been forcible conversions. If they had self-control and did not allow their anger to get the better of their reason, girls would be returned, forcible conversions would be null and void, and their properties returned to them. But this could not be done, if they interfered with the even course of justice and thus spoiled their own case. They could not expect these things, if they expected that their Muslim brothers and sisters should be driven out of India. He regarded any such thing as a monstrous proposition. They could not have the cake and eat it. Moreover, whilst it was true that the minorities, the Hindus and Sikhs, were badly treated in Pakistan, it was equally true that the East Punjab had also treated its minority, the Muslims, likewise. Guilt could not be weighed in the golden scales. He had no data to measure the guilt on either side. It was surely sufficient to know that both the sides were guilty. The universal way to have proper adjustment was for both the states to make a frank and full confession of guilt on either side and come to terms, and failing agreement, to resort to arbitration in the usual manner. The other and rude way was that of war. The thought repelled him. But there was no escape from war, if there was neither agreement, nor arbitration. Meanwhile, he hoped that wiser counsels would prevail and the Muslims, who had not of their own free will chosen to migrate to Pakistan, should be asked by their neighbours to return to their homes with a perfect feeling of safety. This could not come about with the aid of the military. It could be done by return to sanity by the people concerned. He had made his final choice. He had no desire to live to see the ruin of India through fratricide. His incessant prayer was that God would remove him, before any such calamity descended upon their fair land. And he asked the audience to join in the prayer.

In the end, he congratulated the working class on the Hindus and Muslims working together. If they were working in perfect union, they had set a noble example. The workmen should have no communalism among them. Had he not said that if they knew their power and used it wisely and constructively, they would become the real rulers, and the employers would be their trustees and their friends in need and deed? But this happy state of things would come only when the workmen knew that labour was more real capital than the capital in the shape of gold and silver, which labour extracted from the bowels of the earth.

Some Muslim friends had requested Gandhi to visit the Muslim localities in the city, so that those inhabitants who were still there might not leave their homes out of sheer panic. He readily agreed and began by visiting the Daryaganj area on the 18th evening. The deserted appearance of the houses and shops, a few of which had been looted, oppressed him. About a hundred Muslims had gathered in the house of Mr. Asaf Ali. They told Gandhi that they wanted to live in India as loyal citizens of the Indian Union, but they wanted an assurance of their safety, particularly from the partisan behaviour of the police. Some of them were in tears, when they narrated their experiences. They did not approve of what the Muslims in Pakistan had done. But the innocent people should not be made to pay for the guilt of others.

Addressing the Muslims, Gandhi stated that they had to be brave and declare firmly that they would not leave their homes, whatever might happen. They should look to none but God, for their safety and their protection. He was there to do, whatever he could. He had pledged himself to do or die in Noakhali, Bihar and Calcutta, and now, in Delhi. He would not ask those who had left their homes to come back until there was real peace, and the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims agreed to live as brothers, without the help of the police and the military.

He was the friend and servant of the Muslims, as of the Hindus and others. He would not rest, till every Muslim in the Union, who wished to live as a loyal citizen of the Union, was back in his home living in peace and security, and the Hindus and the Sikhs returned likewise to their homes. He had served the Muslims for a lifetime in South Africa and in India. He could never forget the unity of the Khilafat days. It did not last, but it demonstrated the possibilities

of lasting friendship between the Hindus and the Muslims. That was what he lived for and worked for. He was on his way to the Punjab to see that all the Hindus and the Sikhs, who had been turned out of Pakistan, should be able to return to their homes and live there in safety and honour. But, on his way, he was held up at Delhi, and he would not leave it, until real peace returned to the capital. Even if he was the only one to say it, he would never advise the Muslims to leave their homes. If the Muslims lived as law-abiding, honest and loyal citizens of India, no one could touch them. He was not the Government, but he had influence with those in the Government. He had long discussions with them. They did not believe that in India the Muslims had no place, or that, if the Muslims wished to stay there, they had to do so as slaves of the Hindus. Some people had said that Sardar Patel encouraged the idea of the Muslims going away to Pakistan. The Sardar was indignant at the suggestion. But the Sardar had told him that he had reasons to suspect that the vast majority of the Muslims in India were not loyal to India. For such people, it was better to go to Pakistan. But the Sardar did not let his suspicion colour his actions.

Gandhi was convinced that, for those Muslims who wished to be citizens of the Indian Union, loyalty to the Union should come before everything else, and they should be prepared to fight against the whole world for their country. Those who wished to go to Pakistan were free to do so. Only, he did not wish a single Muslim to leave the Union out of fear of the Hindus or the Sikhs. Muslims in Delhi had assured him by their written declaration, that they were loyal citizens of the Union. He would believe their word, as he wished the others to believe his. As such, it was the duty of the Government to protect the Muslims. He for one would not like to live, if he could not achieve that. Every wrong had to be undone, wherever it was. The abducted women had to be returned, forcible conversions considered null and void. The Hindus and Sikhs of Pakistan and the Muslims of East Punjab had to be re-installed in their own homes. In Pakistan and the Indian Union, they should produce conditions that not even a little girl, whatever her religion, should feel insecure. He was glad to have read the statement of Khaliquzzaman Saheb and of the Muslims of Muzaffarnagar. But, before he proceeded to Pakistan, he had to help to quench the fire in Delhi. If Pakistan and the Union were to be perpetual enemies and go to war against each

other, it would ruin both the dominions and their hard-won freedom would be soon lost. He did not wish to live to see that day.

He was taken to some purdah women, before leaving the place. They said that their hopes were fixed on him. He replied that they should rely on none but God. He was trying to do his best.

At the prayer gathering, he told of his meeting with the Muslims at Daryaganj. He could not rest in peace, till every Muslim, Hindu and Sikh in India and in Pakistan was not rehabilitated in his own home. What was to become of Jumma Masjid, the biggest mosque in India, or of Nankana Saheb or Punja Saheb, if no Muslim could live in Delhi or India, and no Sikh lived in Pakistan? Were these sacred places to be turned to other purposes? Never.

Gandhi stated that he was proceeding to the Punjab, in order to make the Muslims undo the wrong that they were said to have perpetrated there. But he could not hope for success, unless he could secure justice for the Muslims in Delhi. They had lived in Delhi for generations. If the Hindus and the Muslims of Delhi would begin to live as brothers once again, he would proceed to the Punjab and do or die in Pakistan. The condition for success was that those in the Union should keep their hands clean. Hinduism was like an ocean. The ocean never became unclean. The same should be true of the Union. It was natural for the Hindus and the Sikhs to feel resentment at what they had suffered. But they should leave it to their Government to secure justice for them.

Partisan behaviour was attributed to the military and the police. It was sad, if it was true. If the custodians of law and order were to become partial and participants in crime, how could law and order be maintained? He appealed to the military and the police to be above prejudice and corruption. They were to be faithful servants of the people, irrespective of caste and creed.

On September 19, he went out at five in the evening and visited the Hindu pocket in Kucha Tarachand, surrounded on all sides by the Muslims, as the spokesman said before a crowded meeting of the Hindus. He recited in exaggerated language the woes of the Hindus and ended by saying that the whole of the locality should be denuded of all Muslims, who were mostly the Muslim Leaguers and who had carried on a wild agitation against the Hindus. He maintained that the Hindus should do exactly, as the Muslims in Pakistan were reported to be doing.

Gandhi said in reply that he could not associate himself with the contention that India should drive out all its Muslim population to Pakistan, as the Muslims of Pakistan were driving out all the non-Muslims. He asserted that two wrongs could never make one right. He, therefore, invited the audience to listen to his advice and to act bravely and fearlessly, and be proud to live in the midst of a large Muslim population. He then went to the Anathalaya in the Pataudi House and advised the responsible parties to bring back the orphans who had been removed out of fright. He was told that there was a shower of bullets from the adjoining Muslim houses, killing one child and wounding another. This happened about the 7th of September. Maulana Ahmad Said and other Muslim friends, who were accompanying him, assured him that the neighbouring Muslims would see to it that no harm befell the inmates. The next place was near the house of Shri Bhargava, who was the sole Hindu living in the midst of Muslims. It was packed with Muslims. The speaker hoped that the Muslims would fulfil his dream, as a lad of twelve, that the Hindus, the Muslims and the other Indians would live together as brothers and friends.

To a small prayer audience in Birla House, Gandhi said that God would fulfil his dream or take him away and save him from witnessing the awful tragedy of one part of India being inhabited by the Muslims only and the other part by the Hindus.

On September 20, he referred to the hymn that had been sung at the prayer meeting. In it the composer said that God removed all fear from the hearts of those who had faith in Him.

Today, the Hindus and the Sikhs were frightening the Muslims in Delhi. Those who wished to be free from fear themselves, should not instil fear into the hearts of others.

Bannu was a city, where he had lived in the house of a Muslim friend. Some persons from Bannu had come to him and complained that unless they were evacuated soon from there, they might all be murdered and ruined. The Muslim friend was as staunch as ever, but was unable to protect them single-handed, try as he might. Other Muslims even from the border were coming daily and filling them with dread and they asked to be rescued in time. He said that he had not the power, but he would pass on their story to Panditji and the Sardar. The friends asked that their own military should come to their aid. The speaker, however, said to them, as he had so often

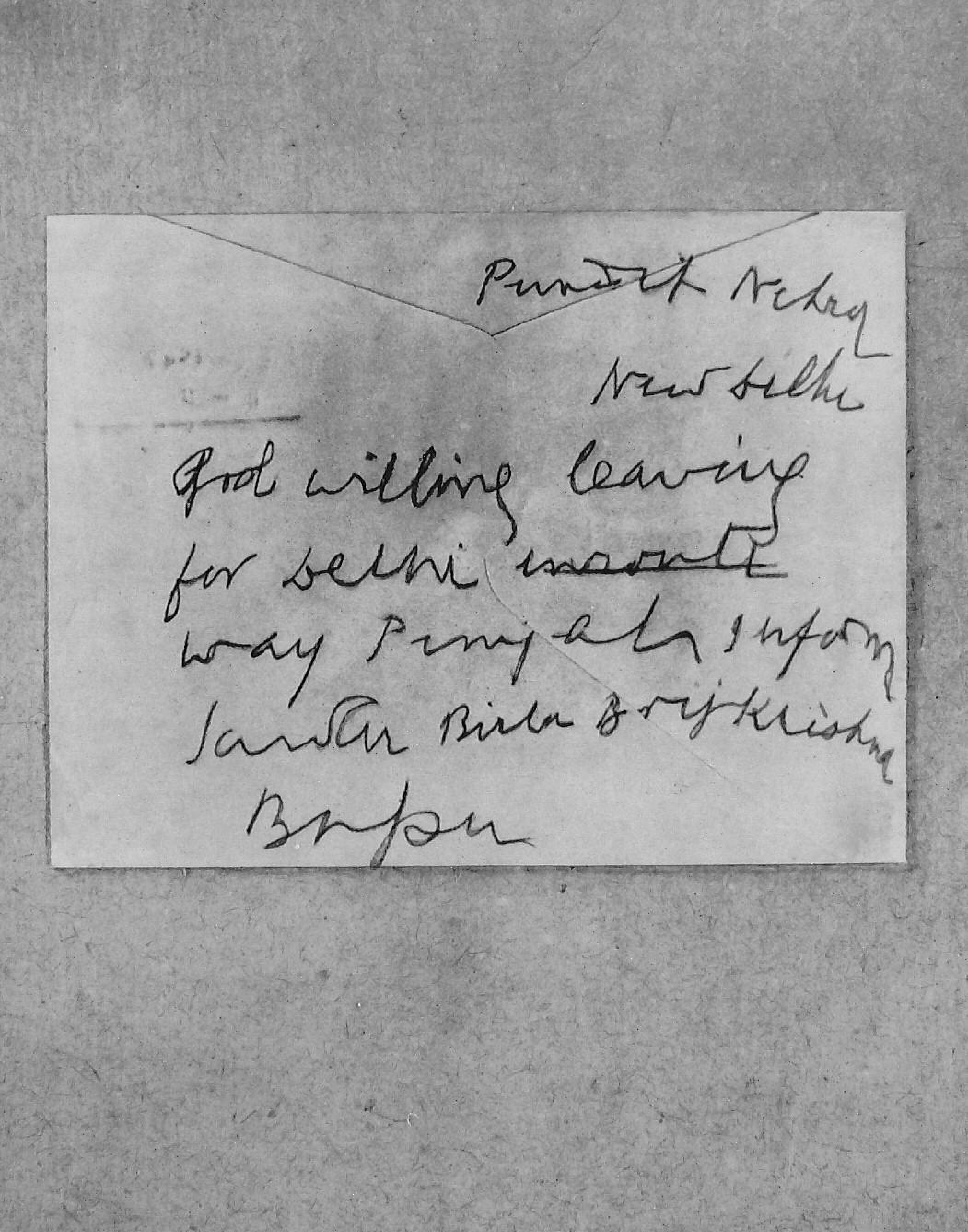
pointed out before: "No one can protect you other than God. No man can protect another." None of them could say, whether he was going to be alive the next day, or even a minute after. God alone was, is and ever shall be. Therefore, it was their duty to call upon Him and to rely on Him. In no case, however, was anyone at any time to return evil for evil.

He further added that the fear of the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan was a very sad reflection on the Government there and contrary to the assurance of protection given to the minorities by Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah himself. It was the bounden duty of the majority in Pakistan, as of the majority in the Union, to protect the small minority, whose honour, life and property were in their hands.

It baffled him, as to why, those who had lived as brothers, those whose blood had mingled in the massacre of the Jallianwala Bagh, should today be enemies. As long as he had breath in his body, he would preach that this should not be. In the agony of his heart, he cried daily, hourly, to God to bring peace. If peace did not come, he would pray to God to take him away.

He thought of the poor refugees in Delhi, in both East and West Punjab, today, while it was raining. They were roofless and homeless, suffering for whose sins? He had heard that the convoys of the Hindus and Sikhs were pouring in from West Punjab into the East, fifty-seven miles in length. It made his brain reel to think how this could be. Such a happening was unparalleled in the history of the world and it made him, as it should make all of them, hang their heads in shame. This was no time to ask, who had done more wrong and who less. It was time to put a stop to this madness.

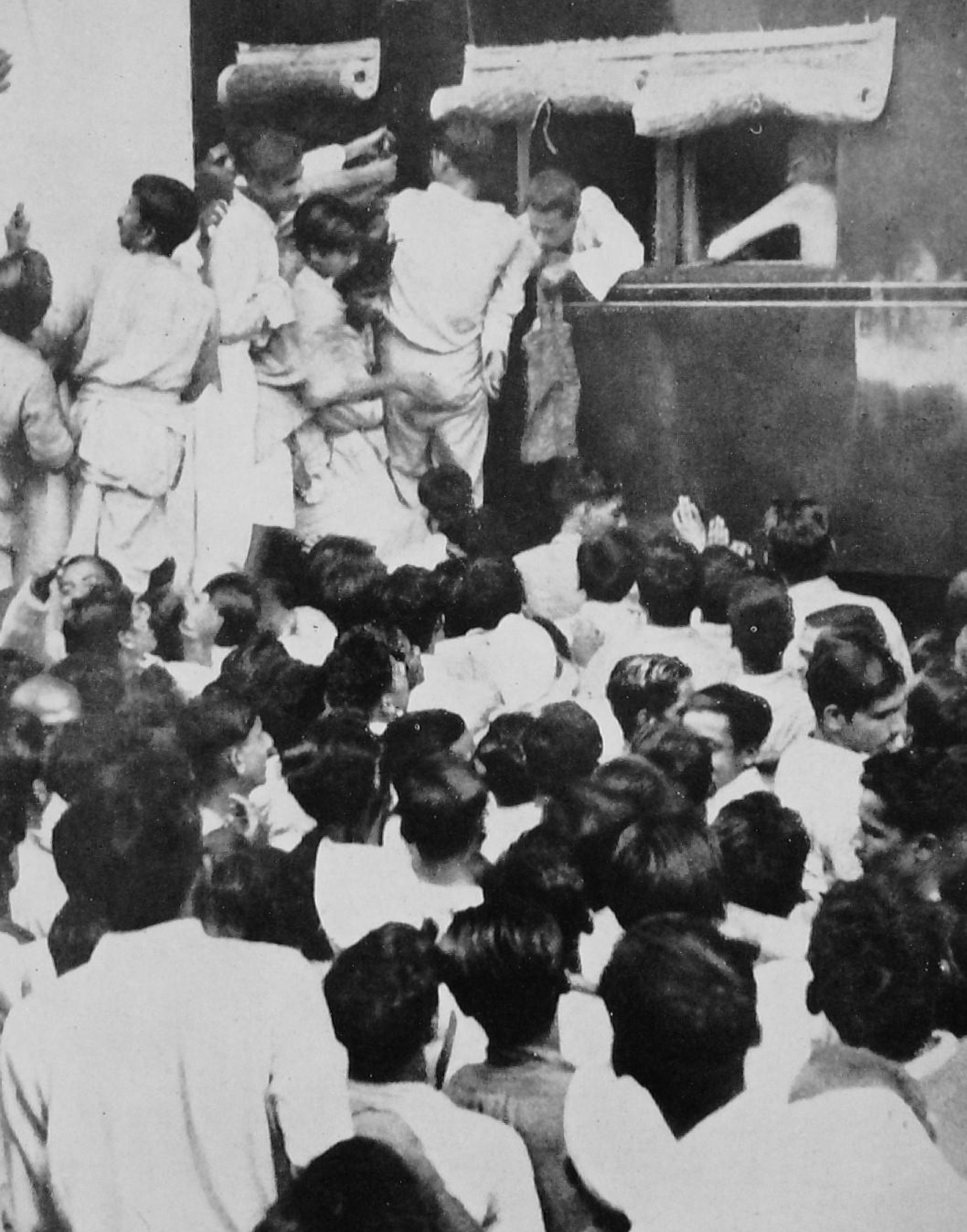
Some remarked to him, that every Muslim in the Indian Union was loyal to Pakistan, and not to India. He would deny the charge. Muslim after Muslim had come and said the contrary to him. In any event, the majority here need not be frightened of the minority. After all, four and a half crores of Muslims in India were spread over the length and breadth of the land. The Muslims in villages were harmless and poor, as in Sevagram. They had no concern with Pakistan. Why turn them out? As for the traitors, if there were any, they could always be dealt with by the law. The traitors were always shot, as happened in the case even of Mr. Amery's son, though the speaker admitted that that was not his law. Others insisted that some Muslim officials were being kept here, in order to keep all the



Pundit Nehru
New Delhi
God willing leaving
for Delhi ~~[illegible]~~
way Punjab. Inform
Sardar Birla Brijkrishna
Bapu

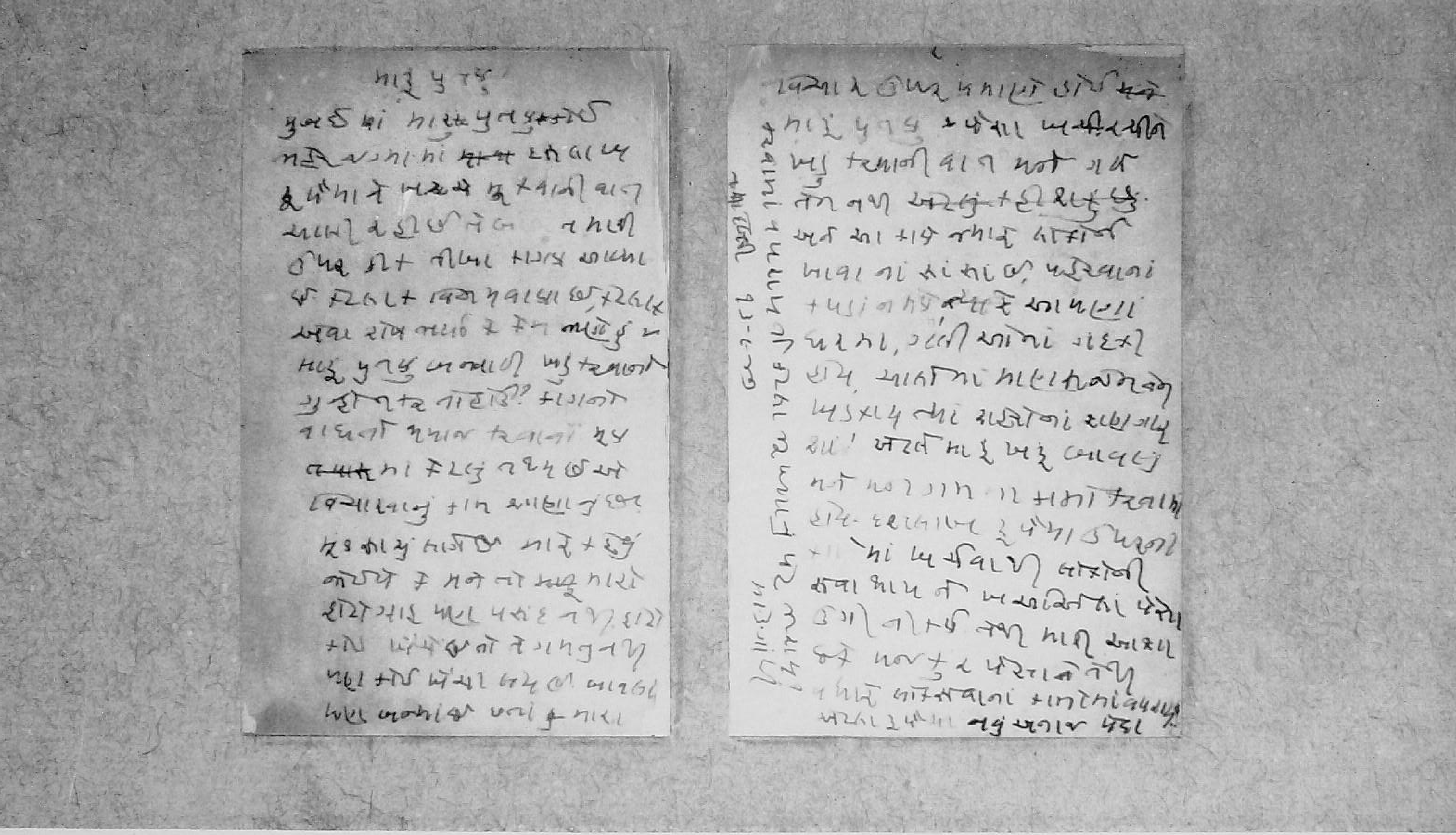
Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

Gandhi's draft of a telegram to Nehru, dated Calcutta, September 1947



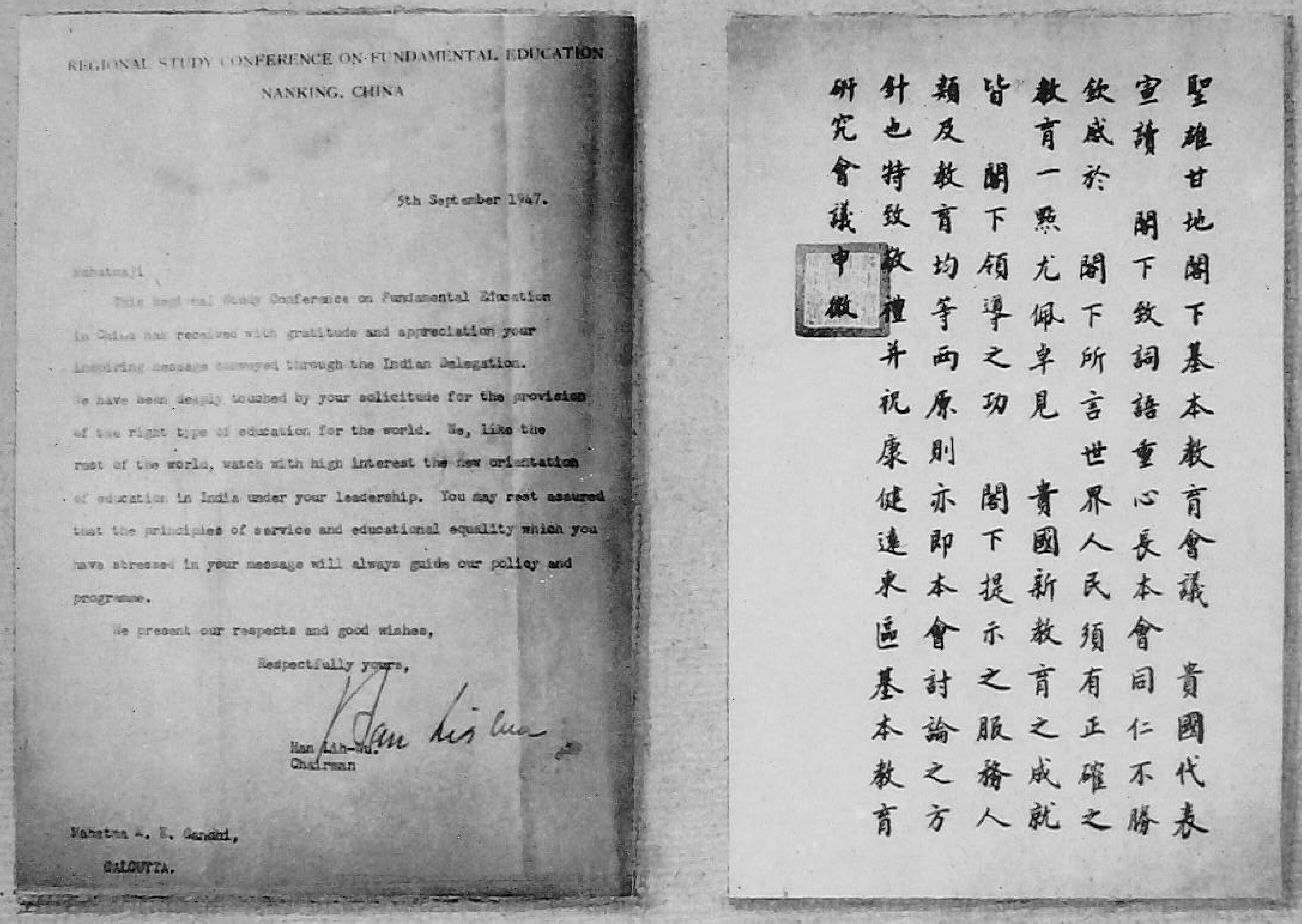
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

On the train to Delhi, September 7, 1947



Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

Gandhi's draft of an article in Gujarati on " My Statue ", dated New Delhi, September 13, 1947



REGIONAL STUDY CONFERENCE ON FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION
NANKING, CHINA

5th September 1947.

Mahatmaji

This Regional Study Conference on Fundamental Education in China has received with gratitude and appreciation your inspiring message conveyed through the Indian Delegation. We have been deeply touched by your solicitude for the provision of the right type of education for the world. We, like the rest of the world, watch with high interest the new orientation of education in India under your leadership. You may rest assured that the principles of service and educational equality which you have stressed in your message will always guide our policy and programme.

We present our respects and good wishes,

Respectfully yours,

Han Lih-wu.
Chairman

Mahatma M. K. Gandhi,
CALCUTTA.

聖雄甘地閣下基本教育會議貴國代表宣讀閣下致詞語重心長本會同仁不勝欽感於閣下所言世界人民須有正確之教育一點尤佩卓見貴國新教育之成就皆閣下領導之功閣下提示之服務人類及教育均等兩原則亦即本會討論之方針也特致敬禮并祝康健遠東區基本教育研究會議

Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

A letter of appreciation in English and Chinese addressed to Gandhi from Regional Study Conference on Fundamental Education, Nanking, China

Muslims in India loyal to Pakistan. Some stated that the Muslims looked upon all the Hindus as kafirs. Learned Muslims had told him that this was wholly incorrect. The Hindus were as much followers of inspired scriptures, as the Muslims, the Christians and the Jews. In any event, he appealed to the Hindus and the Sikhs to shed all fear of the Muslims from their hearts, to be kind to them, to invite them to come back and settle in their old homes and to guarantee them protection from hurt. He was sure that in this way they would get the desired response from the Muslims of Pakistan, and even from the border tribes across the Frontier. This was the way to peace and life for India. To drive every Muslim from the Union and to drive every Hindu and Sikh from Pakistan would mean war and eternal ruin for the whole country. If such a suicidal policy was followed in both the states, it would spell the ruin of Islam and Hinduism in Pakistan and the Indian Union. God alone could beget good. Love bred love. As for revenge, it behoved man to leave the evildoer in God's hands. He knew no other way.

In the midst of riots and strenuous work in Delhi, he attended to his heavy correspondence and wrote regularly for *Harijan* on the vital questions of the day. His advice was solicited from all sides.

The Regional Study Conference on Fundamental Education was held in China early in September. The following message was sent by Gandhi to the conference and the entire audience that had gathered there stood up, while it was being read:

"I am deeply interested in the efforts of the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization to secure peace, through educational and cultural activities. I fully appreciate that real security and lasting peace cannot be secured, so long as extreme inequalities in education and culture exist, as they do among the nations of the world. Light must be carried even to the remotest homes in the less fortunate countries which are in comparative darkness, and I think that, in this cause, the nations, which are economically and educationally advanced, have special responsibility.

"I wish your conference every success, and I hope that you will be able to produce a workable plan for providing the right type of education, particularly, in countries in which opportunities for education are restricted, owing to economic and other circumstances."

In an editorial entitled "Take Care" in *Harijan* of September 21, Gandhi wrote on the language question:

"Unless the Governments and their secretariats take care, the English language is likely to usurp the place of Hindustani. This must do infinite harm to the millions of India, who would never be able to understand English. Surely, it must be quite easy for the provincial governments to have a staff which would carry on all transactions in the provincial and inter-provincial language which, in my opinion, can only be Hindustani written in Nagari or Urdu script.

"Every day lost in making this necessary change is so much cultural loss to the nation. The first and foremost thing is to revive the rich provincial languages, with which India is blessed. It is nothing short of mental sluggishness to plead that, in our courts and in our schools and even in secretariats, some time, probably, a few years, must lapse before the change is made. No doubt, a little difficulty will be felt in multi-lingual provinces, as in Bombay and in Madras, until redistribution of provinces takes place, on the linguistic basis. Provincial governments can devise a method, in order to enable the people in those provinces to feel that they have come into their own. Nor need the provinces wait for the Union for solving the question, whether for inter-provincial speech it shall be Hindustani, written in either Nagari or Urdu script, or mere Hindi, written in Nagari. This should not detain them in making the desired reform. It is a wholly unnecessary controversy likely to be the door, through which English may enter to the eternal disgrace of India. If the first step, that is, revival of the provincial speech in all the public departments takes place immediately, that of inter-provincial speech will follow in quick succession. The provinces will have to deal with the Centre. They dare not do so through English, if the Centre is wise enough quickly to realize that they must not tax the nation culturally for the sake of a handful of Indians, who are too lazy to pick up the speech which can be easily common to the whole of India, without offending any party or section. My plea is for banishing the English language as a cultural usurper, as we successfully banished the political rule of the English usurper. The rich English language will ever retain its natural place, as the international speech of commerce and of diplomacy."

Kaka Kalelkar, a colleague, posed a question, "If the Muslims of the Indian Union affirm their loyalty to the Union, will they accept Hindustani as the national language, and learn the Urdu and Devanagari scripts? Unless you give your clear opinion on this, the work

of Hindustani Prachar Sabha will become difficult. Cannot Azad give his clear opinion on the subject?" Gandhi replied:

"Kaka Saheb says nothing new in his letter. But the subject has acquired added importance at the present juncture. If the Muslims in India own loyalty to India and have chosen to make India their home of their own free will, it is their duty to learn the two scripts. It is said that the Hindus have no place in Pakistan. So they migrate to the Indian Union. In the event of a war between the Union and Pakistan, the Muslims of the Indian Union should be prepared to fight against Pakistan. It is true that there should be no war between the two dominions. They have to live as friends, or die as such. The two states will have to work in close co-operation. In spite of being independent of each other, they will have many things in common. If there is genuine friendship, the people of both the states can be loyal to both. They are both members of the same commonwealth of nations. How can they become enemies of each other? But that discussion is unnecessary here.

"The Union must have a common inter-provincial speech. I will go a step further and say that, if the two states are friends, Hindustani should be the common speech between the two. This does not mean that Urdu and Hindi will cease to exist as distinct forms of speech. They must continue to live and progress. But, if the Hindus and the Muslims, or rather the people of all religions in India are friends, they must accept a common language, evolved from Hindi and Urdu. They should learn the two scripts. This will be a test for the Muslims and the Hindus in the Indian Union.

"It would be wrong to say that if the Muslims of the Union refuse to learn the Nagari, Hindustani cannot become the national language. Whether the Muslims learn the Nagari script or not, the Hindus and the people of all other religions ought to learn the two scripts. It is possible that in view of the poisoned atmosphere of the day, the people may not appreciate this simple proposition. If the Hindus wish to, they can boycott the Urdu script and Urdu words, but all will be the losers thereby. And, therefore, those engaged in Hindustani Prachar should not weaken in their faith or efforts. I agree that people like Maulana Azad and other prominent Muslims of the Indian Union should be the first ones to adopt Hindustani and the two scripts. Who will take the lead, if not they? Difficult times lie ahead of us. May God guide us aright."

A friend wrote: "The Congress has the reins of Government in India. Complete political independence is in our hands. The British have quitted. In such a case, is it not well that you should devote your energy to the prosecution of the constructive programme?"

Gandhi replied: "Communal unity is a vital part of my being. It was so, when khaddar and all the village industries were not even conceived by me. At the time communal unity possessed me, I was a lad twelve years old, just a beginner in English. It was then that I had realized that all Hindus and Muslims and Parsis were sons of the same soil and, as such, were pledged to complete brotherhood. This was before 1885, when the Congress was born. Moreover, it should never be forgotten that communal unity is itself an integral part of the constructive programme. For it, I have run many a risk. It is my conviction that if that unity is not achieved, the constructive programme cannot make substantial progress, at least not at my hands. For, I should not know how to prosecute it in the midst of communal disturbances."

Gandhi had been one of the last to acquiesce in the division of India; he was now to be in the forefront of the struggle to enable the Union Government to function without disaster. He left to the politicians the task of creating the apparatus of government in the two dominions and of devising and conducting their internal and external policy. He set himself the task of steadying the psychological reaction of the mass of the people.

Harijan was playing an important role in the nation's life and Gandhi declared to continue to write for it, though a month earlier he was inclined to suspend *Harijan* and the allied weeklies. Under "My Duty", he wrote:

"This heading has reference only to my duty about the conducting of *Harijan* papers. A fair number of replies have been received in answer to my query. The majority of the readers, with only a few exceptions, want the papers to be continued. The purport of these letters is that the readers desire my views on the present-day topics. This means that, probably, after my death, these will no longer be required.

"My death can take place in three ways: (1) The usual dissolution of the body. (2) Only the eyes move, but the mind no longer works. (3) Both the body and mind may work, but I may withdraw from all public activity.

"The first kind overtakes everybody—some die today, others to-morrow. It demands no consideration.

"The second variety is to be wished by, or for, nobody. I for one do not wish for any such imbecile state. It is a burden on earth.

"The third variety does demand serious consideration. Some of the readers suggest that the period of my active life should be over now. A new age for India began on August 15 last. There is no place for me in that age. I detect anger in this advice, as it is worded. It, therefore, carries little weight with me. Such counsellors are few. I have to come to an independent conclusion. The *Harijan* papers are being conducted and published under Navajivan Trust. The trustees can stop publication, whenever they choose. They have full powers. The trustees do not desire any such stoppage. My life line is cast in active public service. I have not attained the state, which is known as 'action in inaction'. My activity, therefore, seems at present to be destined to continue, till the last breath. Nor is it capable of being divided into watertight compartments. The root of all lies in truth, otherwise known to me as non-violence. Hence the *Harijan* papers must continue, as they are. 'One step enough for me.' "

Resignation To Divine Will

1947

STARTING from his residence at five p.m. on September 21, Gandhi drove through the curfew-ridden streets of Delhi, which bore the traces of the recent disturbances. At Phul Bargesh, he was received by a large gathering of Muslims and was taken to a balcony of a building, from where he addressed the assembled people who were standing on the road. The house-tops in the vicinity were packed with Muslim women in burqa.

That evening, Gandhi did not hold his prayers, as some one from the audience took objection to the recitation from the Koran. "One must never seek to impose one's views on others," he said.

He went on to relate how he had been to a locality, where there were large numbers of Hindus living next door to a large number of Muslims. The Hindus greeted him with "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai", but they little knew that today, there could be no victory for him, nor did he wish to live, if the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs could not live at peace with one another. He was doing his level best to drive home the truth, that there was strength in unity, and weakness in disunion. Just as the tree, that did not bear fruit, withered, so also would his body be useless, if his service could not bear the expected fruit. Whilst this was true, it was equally true that one was bound to work without attachment to fruit. Detachment was more fruitful than attachment. He was merely explaining the logic of facts. A body that had outlived its usefulness would perish, giving place to a new one. The soul was imperishable and continued to take on new forms, for working out its salvation through acts of service.

Addressing a meeting of the Muslims in that area, Gandhi stated that he advised them to stick to their homes, although they might be molested by their Hindu neighbours, even unto death. If they had not that wisdom, they were free to shift, in order to avoid death. Ir they could follow his advice, they would serve both Islam and India.

Those Hindus and Sikhs who molested them would discredit their religion and do irreparable harm to India. It was sheer madness to think that four crores and a half could be wiped out, or banished to Pakistan. Some persons had suggested that the speaker wished to do so. He never had any wish that the Muslim refugees should be reinstated through the police and the military. What, however, he did hold was that when the Hindu and the Sikh anger had subsided, they themselves would bring back the refugees with honour. He did, however, expect the Government to hold the vacated houses in good order and in trust for the evacuees.

If the Government had not that power, and if the people would not let their Government do the right thing, he would advise them to resign in favour of those, who would carry out the mad design to kill out or to banish all the Muslims from India. He had seen such a suggestion seriously made by one newspaper. This was an advice to commit national suicide and to uproot Hinduism. He wondered, if such a newspaper should exist in free India. Was liberty of the press to amount to license, to poison the public mind? People who wanted such a policy to be pursued, should ask for the resignation of their Government. The world which, up till now, had looked up to India, would certainly cease to do so. In any event, so long as he had breath in his body, he would continue to advise against such utter madness.

On Monday, September 22, Gandhi's message was read out at the prayer gathering:

"Though I believe that I was wise in having yielded to a solitary objector and refrained from holding public prayer, it is not improper to examine the incident a little more fully. The prayer was public, only in the sense that no member of the public was debarred from attending it. It was held on the private premises. Propriety required that those only should attend, who believed whole-heartedly in the prayer, including verses from the Koran. Indeed, the rule should be applicable to prayer held even on public grounds. A prayer meeting is not a debating assembly. It is possible to conceive the prayer meetings of many communities on the same plot of land. Decency requires that those who are opposed to particular prayers would abstain from attending the meetings they object to. The reverse would make any meeting impossible without disturbance. Freedom of worship, even of public speech, would become a farce, if interference

became the order of the day. In decent society, the exercise of this elementary right should not need the protection of the bayonet. It should command universal acceptance.

"I have noticed with great joy at the annual sessions of the Congress, on its exhibition grounds, several meetings held by the religious sects, or the political parties holding their gatherings, expressing divergent and often diametrically opposite views without molestation and without any assistance from the police. There have been departures from this fundamental rule and they have excited the public condemnation. Where is that spirit of healthy toleration gone now? Is it because, having gained our political freedom, we are testing it by abusing it? Let us hope, that this is only a passing phase in the nation's life.

"Let me not be told, as I have often been, that it is all due to the misdeeds of the Muslim League. Assuming the truth of the remark, is our toleration made of such poor stuff, that it must yield under some uncommon strain? Decency and toleration to be of any value, must be capable of standing the severest strain. If they cannot, it will be a sad day for India. Let us not make it easy for our critics—we have many—to say that we did not deserve our liberty. Many arguments come to my mind in answer to such critics. But they give poor comfort. It hurts my pride, as a lover of India, of the teeming millions, that our toleration and our combined culture should not be self-evident.

"If India fails, Asia dies. It has been aptly called the nursery of many blended cultures and civilizations. Let India be and remain the hope of all the exploited races of the earth, whether in Asia, in Africa, or in any part of the world.

"This brings me to the bugbear of the unlicensed and the hidden arms. Some have undoubtedly been found. The driblets have been coming to me voluntarily. Let them be unearthed by all means. So far as I know, the haul made up to date, is not much to speak of for Delhi. Hidden arms used to be possessed even during the British regime. No one worried then. By all means, explode all the hidden magazines, when you have made sure, beyond doubt, that they are hidden in a particular place. Let there be no repetition of much cry and little wool. Nor let us apply one code to the British, and set up another code for ourselves, when we profess to be politically free. Let us not call a dog a bad name in order to beat him. After all is

said and done, to be worthy of the liberty, we have won after sixty years of toil, let us bravely face all the difficulties that confront us, however hard they may be. Facing them squarely will make us fitter and nobler.

"Surely, it is cowardly on the part of the majority to banish or to kill the minority for fear that they will all be traitors. Scrupulous regard for the rights of the minorities well becomes the majority. Disregard of them, makes of a majority a laughing-stock. Robust faith in oneself and brave trust of the opponent, so-called or real, is the best safeguard. Therefore, I plead with all the earnestness at my command that all the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims in Delhi should meet together in friendly embrace, and set a noble example to the rest of India, shall I say, to the world! Delhi should forget what the other parts of India have done, or are doing. Then only will it claim the proud privilege of having broken the vicious circle of private revenge and retaliation. They belong, if they ever do, to the state, never to the citizens, as individuals."

Speaking on September 23, Gandhi said that he had received a deputation of the Hindus and the Sikhs from Rawalpindi, as also from Dera Gazi Khan. The Hindus and the Sikhs had made Rawalpindi, what it was. They were all well off there. Today, they were refugees, without shelter. It hurt him deeply. Who made modern Lahore as it was, if not the Hindus and the Sikhs? They were exiles from their own lands. Similarly, the Muslims had not a little to do with the making of Delhi. Thus all communities had worked together to make India, what it was on the 15th of August last. The speaker had no doubt, that the Pakistan authorities should assure full protection to the remaining Hindus and Sikhs, in every part of Pakistan. It was equally the duty of both the governments to demand such protection for their minorities. He was informed that there were still left over 18,000 Hindus and Sikhs in Rawalpindi, and 30,000 in the Wah Camp. He would repeat his advice, that they should all be prepared to die to a man, rather than leave their homes. The art of dying bravely and with honour, did not need any special training, save a living faith in God. Then there would be no abductions and no forcible conversions. He knew that they were anxious that he should go to the Punjab, at the earliest moment. He wanted to do so. But if he failed in Delhi, it was impossible for him to succeed in Pakistan. For, he wanted to go to all the parts and provinces of

Pakistan under the protection of no escort, save God. He would go as a friend of the Muslims, as of others. His life would be at their disposal. He hoped that he would cheerfully die at the hands of anyone, who chose to take his life. Then, he would have done, as he advised all to do.

The refugees had also asked him for houses. He told them that there was the land, and the canopy of the sky above their heads. They should be content with such accommodation, rather than inhabit the houses forcibly vacated by the Muslims. If they would all work, they could within the day put up the necessary shelters. And what was more, they could then assuage the anger of the refugees and bring about an atmosphere, that would enable him to go to the Punjab at once.

"The spirit of revenge and retaliation fills the atmosphere," he observed on September 24th. The Hindus and the Sikhs in Delhi did not want the Muslims in Delhi. If they had been driven away from Pakistan, why should the Muslims have a place in the Indian Union, or in Delhi at least, they argued. It was the Muslim League that had thrown out the gauntlet. The speaker agreed that the Muslim League had been wrong to have raised the cry of "*larkar lenge Pakistan*". He had never believed that such a thing could happen. In fact, they could not have succeeded in partitioning the country through force. If the Congress and the British had not agreed, there would be no Pakistan today. Nobody could now go back upon it. The Muslims of Pakistan were entitled to it. Let them, for a moment, see how they got independence. The principal fighter was the Congress. The weapon was passive resistance. The British had yielded to India's passive resistance and retired. To undo Pakistan by force would be to undo swaraj. India had two governments. It was the duty of the citizens to allow the two governments to fight out among themselves. The daily toll of lives was a criminal waste which did nobody any good and did infinite harm.

If the people became lawless and fought among themselves, then they would prove that they were unable to digest freedom. If one dominion behaved correctly, all along the line, that would force the other too to do likewise. It would have the whole world behind it. Surely, they would not like to rewrite the Congress history and make the Union a Hindu state, in which the people of other faiths had no place. He hoped that they would not stultify themselves.

Let them contemplate what was now going on in Junagadh. Was there to be a war between Junagadh on the one hand, and almost all the other Kathiawad states on the other? If the rest of the princes and the people truly combined, he had no doubt whatsoever, that Junagadh would not stand aloof from the other states of Kathiawad. For this, the rule of law was absolutely essential.

On September 25, someone handed over a note to Gandhi before the prayers started, complaining that the Pakistan Government was driving away the Hindus and the Sikhs from Pakistan. The speaker had advised the Indian Union Government to let the Muslims stay in India, as equal citizens. How could the Indian Union Government bear this double burden?

Answering this question after the prayers, Gandhi observed that he did not propose that the Indian Union Government should ignore the ill treatment of the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. They were bound to do their utmost to save them. But the answer was, undoubtedly, not that they were to drive away the Muslims and copy the reputed methods of Pakistan. Those who wished to go to Pakistan of their own free will, should be safely conducted to the border. To ensure the safety of the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan, was the duty of the Indian Union Government. But for that, the Government should be given a free hand and should receive the full and sincere co-operation of every Indian. It was no co-operation for the citizen, to take the law into his own hands. Our independence was a baby of one month and ten days. If they continued the mad career of retaliation, they would kill the baby, even in its babyhood.

He then narrated the story of the Ramayana. The uneven battle between the mighty Ravana and the exile Rama was won by Rama by strict adherence to *dharma*. If both sides indulged in lawlessness, who could point the finger against the other? The question of degree or who started it, could not justify their behaviour.

They were brave men. They stood up against the mighty British Empire. Why had they become weak today? The brave feared none but God. If the Muslims proved traitors, their treachery would kill them. It was the biggest offence in any state. No state could harbour traitors. But it was unbecoming to turn out men on suspicion.

He had heard that the military and police were taking sides with the Hindus in the Indian Union, and with the Muslims in Pakistan. It hurt him deeply to be told so. They could not usefully think of

what they were capable of doing, when they were under the foreign masters. Today, they, including the British officers, were servants of the nation. They were expected to be above corruption or partiality. To the people, he appealed not to fear the police and the military. After all, they were too few compared to the millions inhabiting their vast country. If the millions were correct in their conduct, the police and the military could not but act likewise.

He then told them of his meeting the Governor-General during the day. Later on, he had met prominent workers and citizens of all the communities from Delhi, and after that he attended the Congress Working Committee meeting. Everywhere the same problem was discussed, how to quench the flames of hatred and revenge. It was for man to put forth his best effort, the result could then be confidently placed in the hands of God, who only helped those who helped themselves.

On September 26, he told the audience that during the day he had a visit from Sikh friends. They said that the present butchery was contrary to the Sikh religion and, in fact, was inconsistent with any religion. One of them gave an apt verse from the Granth Saheb wherein Guru Nanak said, that God may be called by the name of Allah, Rahim, and so on. The name did not matter, if He was enshrined in their hearts. Guru Nanak's efforts, like those of Kabir, had been directed towards synthesizing the various religions. He had forgotten to bring the apt verse, which he had got written down, in order to share it with them. He would bring it the next day.

Pandit Thakur Datt of Lahore had come to him and had narrated his tale of woe. He wept, as he was giving the narrative. He had felt forced to leave Lahore. He said that he believed in what the speaker had said about dying at one's place in Pakistan, rather than be bullied out, but he had lacked the strength to follow that sound advice. He was willing to go back and face death. The speaker did not want him to do that. But he said that he wanted him and all other Hindu and Sikh friends to help him in restoring real peace in Delhi. Then he would proceed to Western Pakistan with fresh strength. He would go to Lahore and Rawalpindi, Shekhupura and the other places in the West Punjab, he would go to N.-W. Frontier Province and to Sind. He was the servant and the well-wisher of all. He was sure, no one would prevent him from going anywhere. And he would not go with a military escort. He would put his life in the

hands of the people. He would not rest till every Hindu and Sikh, who were driven away from Pakistan, returned to his home with honour and dignity.

He had ever been an opponent of all warfare. But if there was no other way of securing justice from Pakistan, if Pakistan persistently refused to see its proved error and continued to minimize it, the Indian Union Government would have to go to war against it. War was not a joke. No one wanted war. That way lay destruction. But, he could never advise anyone to put up with injustice. If all the Hindus were annihilated for a just cause, he would not mind it. If there was a war, the Hindus in Pakistan could not be fifth-columnists there. No one would tolerate that. If their loyalty lay not with Pakistan, they should leave it. Similarly, the Muslims, whose loyalty was with Pakistan, should not stay in the Indian Union. To secure justice for the Hindus and the Sikhs, was the function of the Government. The people could make the Government do their will. As for himself, his way was different. He worshipped God, which was Truth and Ahimsa.

There was a time, when India listened to him. Today, he was a back number. He was told he had no place in the new order, where they wanted machines, navy and air force, and what not. He could never be a party to that. If they could have the courage to say that they would retain freedom, with the help of the same force with which they had won it, he was their man. His physical incapacity and his depression would vanish in a moment.

The Muslims were reported to have said, "*Hans ke liya Pakistan, lar ke lenge Hindustan.*" If he had his way, he would never let them have it by force of arms. Some of them dreamt of converting the whole of India to Islam. That never would happen through war, Pakistan could never destroy Hinduism. The Hindus alone could destroy themselves and their faith. Similarly, if Islam was destroyed, it would be destroyed by the Muslims in Pakistan, and not by the Hindus in Hindustan.

Referring to the question raised by a member of the audience, Gandhi said that he was asked to work a miracle and save India and the Hindus and the Sikhs, if he was really a Mahatma. He had never claimed to be a Mahatma. He was an ordinary human being, like any one of them, except that he was much frailer. The only difference in his favour might be, that his faith in God was,

perhaps, stronger than theirs. If all Indians—Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Muslims and Christians, were prepared to lay down their lives for the sake of India, she could never come to harm. He wanted them to remember, what the *rishis* had said: "Truth alone is victorious, never falsehood."

On September 27, Gandhi read the verse from the Granth Saheb to which he had referred the previous evening. He explained: "The verse affirms that man calls God by many names—Rama, Khuda, etc. Some go on a pilgrimage and bathe in the sacred river, others go to Mecca; some worship Him in temples, others in mosques, and some just bow their heads in reverence; some read the Vedas, the others the Koran; some dress in blue, others in white; some call themselves the Hindus, others the Muslims. Guru Nanak says that he who truly follows God's law, knows His secret. This teaching is universal in Hinduism. It is very difficult, therefore, to understand the madness that wants to turn four and a half crores of Muslims out of India."

With deep regret, he then referred to what he had heard from Rajkumari Kaur. She was now in charge of the health portfolio. She was a Christian, and on that account claimed to be a Sikh and a Hindu, as well. She tried to look after the welfare of all the camps whether they were Muslim or Hindu. She had collected a band of Christian girls and men, to serve the Muslim refugee camps. Now, some angry and senseless persons were threatening the Christians, and many of them had left their homes. This was monstrous. He was glad to learn from the Rajkumari that, in one place, Hindus had guaranteed protection to the poor Christians, and he hoped that they would all soon be able to return to their homes in peace and be allowed to carry on their service to sick and suffering humanity without any molestation.

The newspapers had displayed his remarks about war in such a way, that there was an inquiry from Calcutta, whether he had now really begun to advocate war. He was wedded to non-violence for all time and could never advocate war. In a state run by him, there would be no police and no military. But he was not running the Government of the Indian Union. He had merely pointed out the various possibilities. Indian Union and Pakistan should settle their differences by mutual consultations, and failing that, fall back upon arbitration. But if one party persisted in wrongdoing, and would

accept neither of the two ways, the only way left open was that of war. They should know the circumstances that prompted his remark. In almost all his prayer speeches in Delhi, he had to tell the people not to take the law into their own hands, but let their Government secure justice for them. He put before them the logical steps, which excluded lynch law. The latter would make a decent government impossible. But that did not mean, that his faith in non-violence had weakened in the least degree.

On September 28, there was a larger prayer audience than usual. Gandhi asked if there was any one who objected to the prayer with the special verses from the Koran. Two members of the audience raised their hands in protest, and Gandhi said he would respect the objection, though he knew that it would be a sore disappointment to the rest of the audience. However, he told the objectors that although, as a firm believer in non-violence, he could not do otherwise, he could not help remarking that it was highly improper for them to flout the wishes of the very large majority against them. They should realize from the remarks that were to follow, that the intolerance that the objectors were betrayed into, was a symptom of the distemper, which was now visible in the country and which had prompted the very bitter remarks from Churchill. He then paraphrased in his Hindustani speech the following extract, which had appeared in the papers:

"Mr. Churchill declared in a speech here tonight: 'The fearful massacres, which are occurring in India, are no surprise to me. We are, of course, only at the beginning of these horrors and butcheries, perpetrated upon one another, with the ferocity of cannibals, by the races gifted with capacities for the highest culture, and who had for generations dwelt, side by side, in general peace, under the broad, tolerant and impartial rule of the British Crown and Parliament. I cannot but doubt, that the future will witness a vast abridgement of the population throughout, what has for sixty or seventy years been the most peaceful part of the world and that, at the same time, will come a retrogression of civilization throughout these enormous regions, constituting one of the most melancholy tragedies, which Asia has ever known.' "

He said that they all knew that Mr. Churchill was himself a great man. He belonged to the blue blood of England. The Marlboroughs were famous in English history. Mr. Churchill took the helm, when

Great Britain was in peril on the outbreak of the second World War. He, undoubtedly, saved what was then the empire from that peril. It would be wrong to argue that, without America and the other allies, Great Britain would not have won the war. Who brought the powers together, if it was not his energetic statesmanship? After the war was won, the great nation, whom he so brilliantly represented, whilst recognizing Mr. Churchill's services, did not hesitate to prefer a purely Labour Government for the purpose of reconstructing the British Isles, which had had to pay a heavy toll of life and money. The British rose to the occasion, decided voluntarily to break the empire, and erect, in its place, an unseen and more glorious empire of hearts. The speaker then referred to the voluntary declaration of India, though now broken into two parts, as willing member of the Commonwealth. This noble step was taken by the whole of British nation, consisting of all the parties. In this act, Mr. Churchill and his party were the partners. Whether the future would justify the step or not, was a different matter and irrelevant to the speaker's thesis, which was, that Mr. Churchill, being associated with the act of the transformation, would be expected to say or do nothing, that would diminish its virtue. Surely, there was nothing in modern history to be compared with the British withdrawal of power. The speaker recalled the renunciation of Asoka the Good, to see whom, was to be the proud possessor of good fortune. But Asoka was incomparable and did not belong to modern history. The speaker, therefore, was sorry to read Reuter's summary of Mr. Churchill's speech, which he presumed, was not misinterpreted by the renowned news agency. Mr. Churchill had rendered a disservice to the nation, of which he was a great servant. If he knew the fate that would befall India after she became free from the British yoke, did he for a moment stop to think that the blame belonged to the builders of the empire, rather than to the "races", in his opinion, "gifted with capacities for the highest culture"? The speaker suggested that Churchill was overhasty in his sweeping generalization. India was composed of teeming millions, in which a few lakhs, turned savages, counted for little. He made bold to invite Mr. Churchill to come to India and study things for himself, not as a partisan, with preconceived notions, but as an impartial honest Englishman, who put honour before his party, and who was intent on making the British transaction a glorious success. Great Britain's unique action would be judged by the results.

The dismemberment of India constituted an unconscious invitation to the two parts to fight among themselves. The free grant of independence to the two parts, as sister dominions, seemed to taint the gift. It was useless to say, that either dominion was free to secede from the British family of nations. It was easier said, than done. He must not carry the argument further. He had said sufficient to show why Mr. Churchill had to be more circumspect, than he had been. He had condemned his partners, before he had studied the situation first hand. To the audience, which listened to him, he would say, that many of the listeners had provided a handle to Mr. Churchill. It was not too late to mend their manners and falsify Mr. Churchill's forebodings. He knew that his was a voice in the wilderness. If it was not, and if it had the potency, which it had before the talks of independence began, he knew that nothing of the savagery, described with so much relish and magnified by Mr. Churchill, would ever have happened, and they would have been on a fair way to solving their economic and other domestic difficulties.

On September 29, Gandhi's prayer message was read out:

"My reference to the possibility of a war between the two sister dominions seems, I am told, to have produced a scare in the West. I do not know what reports were sent outside by newspaper correspondents. Summaries are always a dangerous enterprise, except when they truly reflect the speaker's opinion. An unwarranted summary of a pamphlet, I had written about South Africa in 1896, nearly cost me my life. It was so hopelessly unwarranted that within twenty-four hours of my being lynched, European opinion in South Africa was turned from anger into contrition, that an innocent man was made to suffer for no fault that he had committed. The moral that I wish to draw from the foregoing version is, that no one should be held responsible for what he has not said or done.

"I hold that not a single mention of war in my speeches can be interpreted to mean that there was any incitement to, or approval of, a war between Pakistan and the Union, unless mere mention of it, is to be taboo. We have among us the superstition, that the mere mention of a snake ensures its appearance in the house, in which the mention is made even by a child. I hope that no one in India entertains such superstition about war.

"I claim that I rendered a service to both the sister states by examining the present situation, and definitely stating when the cause

of war could arise between the two states. And this was done not to promote war but to avoid it, as far as possible. I endeavoured, too, to show that if the insensate murders, loot and arson by the people continued, they would force the hands of their governments. Was it wrong to draw public attention to the logical steps, that inevitably followed one after another?

"India knows and the world should know, that every ounce of my energy has been and is being devoted to the definite avoidance of fratricide culminating in war. When a man vowed to non-violence, as the law governing the human beings, dares to refer to war, he can only do it, so as to strain every nerve to avoid war. Such is my fundamental position, from which I hope never to swerve, even to my dying day."

On September 30, referring to the wanton attacks on Muslims, Gandhi asked, who were the Muslims of India? The vast majority had not come from Arabia, he said. A few had come from outside. But the crores were converts from Hinduism. He would not mind intelligent conversion. The so-called untouchables and Shudras were converted, not by an appeal to reason. The responsibility was their own. By giving place to untouchability in Hindu religion and by oppressing the so-called untouchables, the Hindus had forced them into the arms of Islam. It was unbecoming on their part to kill or oppress these brothers and sisters.

Speaking after prayers on October 1st, Gandhi told that a sister had handed a note to him the previous evening, in which she had said, that both she and her husband were anxious to serve, but no one told them what to do. The speaker said that there were several such complaints. He had one and the same reply for all of them. The field of service, unlike that of the authority, was unlimited. It was as vast, as the earth itself. It could take in an unlimited number of workers. For instance, the city of Delhi had never been ideally clean. With the influx of the refugees, the sanitation had become poorer still. The sanitation of the various refugee camps was far from satisfactory. Anyone was free to take up that work. And even if they could not get to the refugee camps, they could clean their own surroundings, and that was bound to affect the whole city. No one should look to anyone else to give directions. To physical cleanliness, he added cleanliness of mind and spirit. This was a big job and pregnant with great possibilities.

He had been to a meeting of prominent citizens of Delhi and had invited brief questions. A friend got up and practically delivered a speech. The substance of it was that the citizens of Delhi were ready to live in peace with the Muslims, provided they were loyal to the Indian Union and surrendered all the arms and ammunition, which they possessed without licence. There could be no two opinions, that those who wished to live in the Union must be loyal to the Union, whatever may be their faith, and they should surrender unlicensed arms unsolicited. But he asked the friend to add a third condition to the two mentioned, and that was to leave the execution of the conditions to the Government.

There were about 50,000 Muslim refugees in Purana Quila and some more on the Humayun's tomb grounds. The conditions of life were none too pleasant there. To justify their suffering by stating the sufferings of the Hindu and the Sikh refugees in Pakistan, and even in the Indian Union, was wrong. The Hindus and the Sikhs had suffered, no doubt, and suffered heavily. It was for the Government of the Union of India to secure justice for them. Lahore was famous for its various educational institutions. And they had all been founded by private enterprise. The Punjabis were industrious. They knew how to earn money and how to spend in charity. There were first-class hospitals, raised by the Hindus and the Sikhs in Lahore. All those institutions and private property had to be restored to the rightful owners. It could, however, not be done by seeking private revenge. It was the duty of the Union Government to see that the Pakistan Government did its duty, as it was that of Pakistan to ensure justice by the Indian Union. They could not secure justice by copying the evil ways of one another. If two men go out riding and one falls down, was the other to follow suit? That would merely result in breaking the bones of both. Supposing, the Muslims would not be loyal to the Indian Union, nor would they surrender arms, were they to continue murder of innocent men, women and children on that account? It was for the Government to see that the traitors were dealt with properly. By taking to savagery, the people in both the states had tarnished the fair name that India had earned in the world. They were thereby bargaining for slavery, and for destruction of their great religions. They were free to do so. But he, who had staked his life to gain the independence of India, did not wish to be a living witness to its destruction. With every breath, he prayed

to God, either to give him the strength to quench the flames, or to remove him from this earth.

He then dealt with the reported attack on a hospital in Delhi by a frenzied mob from a neighbouring village, resulting in the death of four patients and injury to a few more. It was, indeed, a most cowardly and inhuman act, which could never be justified under any circumstances.

And there was another report, that some of the Muslim passengers had been thrown out of a moving train, coming from Naini Tal to Allahabad. He was at his wit's end to understand the rationale behind such acts. These acts should make every Indian hang down his head in shame.

On October 2, Gandhi referred to the stream of visitors he had had all day, including the representatives of the foreign embassies and Lady Mountbatten. They had all come to congratulate him on his seventy-eighth birthday. Hehad received scores of telegrams also, both from home and abroad. It was impossible to send individual replies. But, he asked himself, "Where did the congratulations come in? Would it not be more appropriate to say condolences?" Flowers even had come to him from the refugees and many tributes, both in money and good wishes. He, however, said that there was nothing but agony in his heart. Time was, when whatever he said, the masses followed. Today, his was a lone voice. All he heard from them was that they would not allow the Muslims to stay in the Indian Union. And if the cry was against the Muslims today, what might be the fate of the Parsis, the Christians and even the Europeans tomorrow? He said that many friends had hoped, he would live to be 125, but he had lost all desire to live long, let alone 125 years. He was utterly unable to appropriate any of the congratulations showered on him. He could not live, while hatred and killing marred the atmosphere. He, therefore, pleaded with them all to give up the present madness. It did not matter what was being done to non-Muslims in Pakistan. If one party had sunk low, the other could not afford to do likewise. He asked them to pause and consider the evil consequences of such misdeeds. They should purge their hearts of hatred.

A fervent appeal to the people of India, to follow the lead given by Gandhi, was made by Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel and Kripalani, addressing a mass meeting organized by the Delhi Congress Committee, in connection with Gandhi's birthday celebrations.

Nehru called upon the citizens to make up their minds as to the path which they were going to follow, the one pointed out by that "apostle of truth and non-violence", or the other one, on which they had, for the past many days, been led by the anti-social elements in the country. They could not shout "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai", and pursue a policy of hatred towards their own brethren.

Gandhi's principles, Nehru emphasized, had carried them through in their fight against foreign domination and they could be relied upon to be the right principles, even when that struggle was over. "Mahatma Gandhi's teachings and principles are of a fundamental nature and they do not outlive their utility, simply because the situation now is changed."

Maulana Azad in a radio broadcast said: "Today is the seventy-eighth birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, who has spent fifty years of his life in the cause of peace and in the service of humanity. Today when we are celebrating the birthday of Gandhiji, we should not forget, what is happening to the lives of millions of countrymen. The same India, which gave to the world the greatest man of the age, is destroying the principles of peace and humanity for which that great man stands."

"Let the whole world honour this man," said Sarojini Naidu, the Governor of U.P., in her memorable broadcast speech:

"It was on the eve of the last Great World War, that we heard the rumour that a strange man was coming to England from South Africa. There was great interest in his coming. It was said, that he had enunciated a strange gospel, alien to the modern world and alien to the ancient world. His name was Gandhi. I climbed the steps of a house in a very unfashionable quarter in London, and I stood on the threshold of an open door, and I found a man seated on a black blanket on the floor, with funny little boxes around him, eating dreadful-looking bits out of a wooden bowl, with a wooden spoon. He looked up and said, 'Oh, is it you?' I said: 'Certainly not, it looks dreadful to me.' And so laughing, we began a friendship, that has lasted, grown, developed through all these many years. He was Gandhi, as yet a curiosity to the world. They knew that he was someone distinguished, that he had won a great moral victory over a small issue, great to him, in South Africa, in a contest with great General Smuts. The issues today against General Smuts are of a vast magnitude, but Gandhi had won on a great moral principle.

"Who is this Gandhi and why is it, today, that he represents the supreme moral force in the world? Throughout history, age after age, in every country, there have been very distinguished men and great men—kings, warriors, lawgivers, poets—men whose fame had rang through the corridors of their own periods. Their names have survived, and they are fresh today in their radiance, as they were in their own times. Buddha, Jesus Christ and Mahomed, and a few others, whose gospel was an exaltation to the spirit of man. Today, there is Gandhi, a tiny man, a fragile man, a man of no worldly importance, of no earthly possessions, and yet a man, greater than the emperors. The emperors have passed in processions, through the streets of their own cities and provinces, and crowds have applauded them out of duty, sometimes tinged with affection, and sometimes tinged with fear, but because it was a convention. But this man, with his crooked bones, his toothless mouth, his square yard of clothing, or of cloth rather, that just covers his nakedness, where nakedness must be covered, he passes meekly through the years, he faces embattled forces, he overthrows empires, he conquers death, but what is it in him that has given him this power, this magic, this authority, this prestige, this almost godlike quality of swaying the hearts and minds of men?

"It is a quality he shares with that small band of great teachers of the world, who inaugurated great religions. He shares with them the quality of bringing hope to the hopeless, of bringing courage to those who are afraid, of uplifting those who have fallen, of soothing down the beastly passions of those, who have lost all the sense of sanity and humanity. With Christ, he shares the great gospel, that love is the fulfilling of the law. With the great Mahomed, he shares the gospel of brotherhood of man, equality of man and oneness of man. With Lord Buddha, he shares the great evangel, that the duty of life is not self-seeking, but to seek the truth, no matter at what sacrifice. With the great poets of the world, he shares the ecstacy of the vision that the future of man is great, that the future of man can never be destroyed, that all sin will destroy itself, but that love and humanity must endure, grow and reach the stars. Therefore, today a broken world ruined by wars and hatred, a broken world seeking for a new civilization honours the name of Mahatma Gandhi. In himself, he is nothing. There are men of learning, greater than his, and there are men of wealth and power, and men of fame, but who

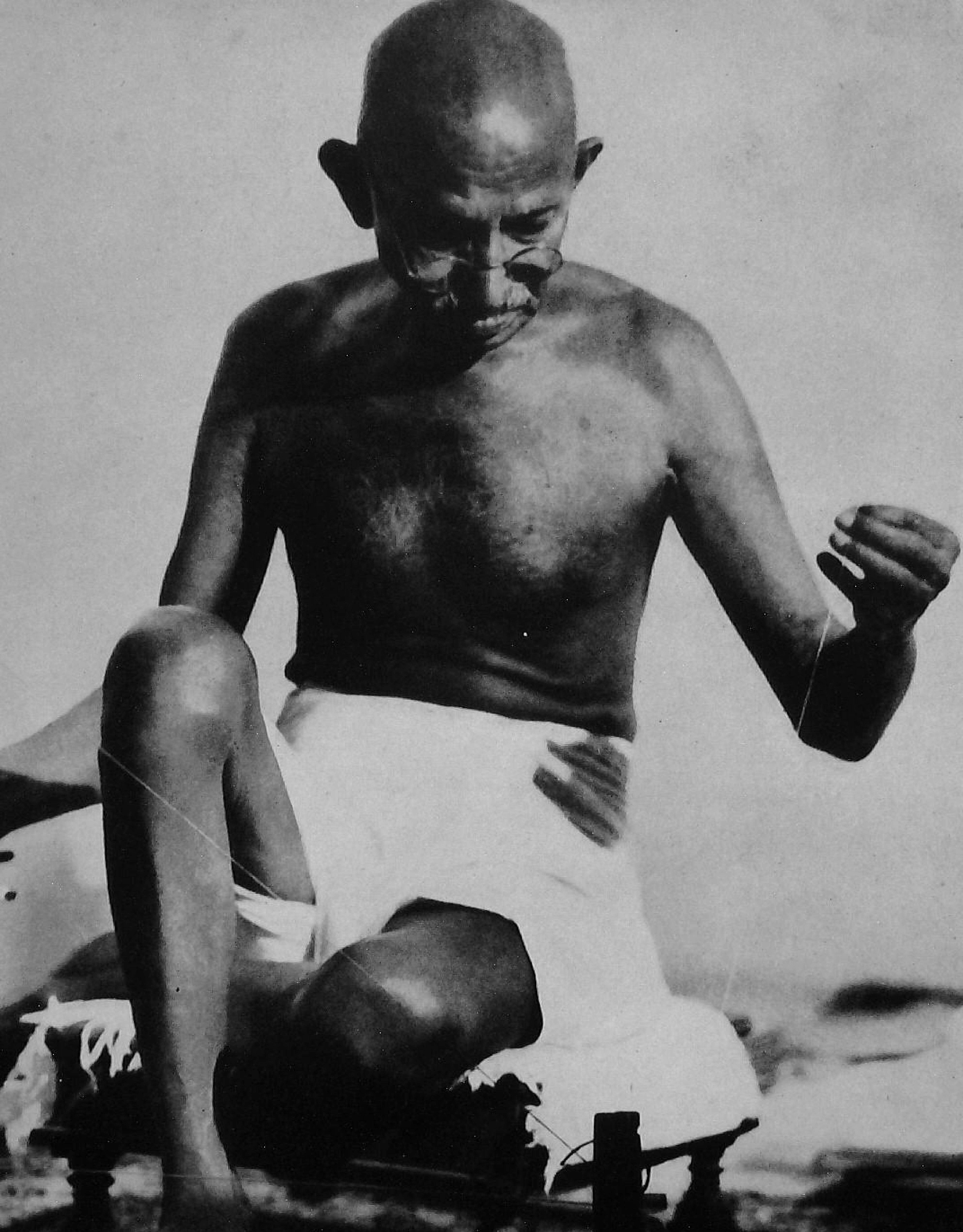
is there that combines in one frail body, the supreme qualities of virtue enshrined in him—courage indomitable, faith invincible, and compassion that embraces the entire world? This transcendental love of humanity that recognizes no limitations of race, no barriers of country, but gives to all, like a shining sun, the same abundance of love, understanding and service. Every day—today, and yesterday and tomorrow—every day is the same story of the miracle of Gandhi in our own age. Who said that the age of miracles is past? How should the age of miracles be past, while there is such a superb example of embodied miracle in our midst? Let the whole world honour this man, whose birthday we celebrate. He was born like other men, he will die like other men, but, unlike them, he will live through the beautiful gospel he has enunciated—that hatred cannot be conquered by hatred, the sword cannot be conquered by the sword, that power cannot be exploited over the weak and the fallen, that the gospel of non-violence, which is the most dynamic and the most creative gospel of power in the world, is the only true foundation of a new civilization, yet to be built. It is to this man, who is my leader, my friend and my father, I pay this tribute of homage. Between him and me, friendship began with a jest, but has grown to be a relationship between a teacher and a disciple, between a father and a daughter, and yet an intimate relationship of true comradeship and fellowship, because he the saint and I the singer seek the truth in our different ways, but strive for the same goal."

One of the numerous birthday messages said: "May I suggest that the present situation should not depress you? In my opinion, this is the final attempt of the forces of evil, to foil the divine plan of India's contribution to the solution of the world's distress, by way of non-violence. You are today the only instrument in the world, to further the divine purpose."

"It is, perhaps, wrong to describe my present state of mind as depression," Gandhi promptly replied. "I have but stated a fact. I am not vain enough to think, that the divine purpose can only be fulfilled through me. It is as likely as not, that a fitter instrument will be used to carry it out, and that I was good enough to represent a weak nation, not a strong one. May it not be that a man purer, more courageous, more far-seeing, is wanted for the final purpose? This is all speculation. No one has the capacity to judge God. We are drops in that limitless ocean of mercy.

"Without doubt, the ideal thing would be, neither to wish to live 125 years, nor to wish to die now. Mine must be a state of complete resignation to the Divine Will. The ideal ceases to be that, when it becomes real. All we can do, is to make as near an approach to it, as possible. This I am doing with as much energy, as I can summon to my assistance.

"And if I had the impertinence openly to declare my wish to live 125 years, I must have the humility, under changed circumstances, openly to shed that wish. I have done no more, no less. This has not been done in a spirit of depression. The more apt term perhaps is helplessness. In that state, I invoke the aid of the all-embracing Power to take me away from this 'vale of tears', rather than make me a helpless witness of the butchery by man become savage, whether he dares to call himself a Muslim or Hindu or what not. Yet I cry, 'Not my will, but Thine alone shall prevail.' If He wants me, He will keep me here on this earth, yet awhile."

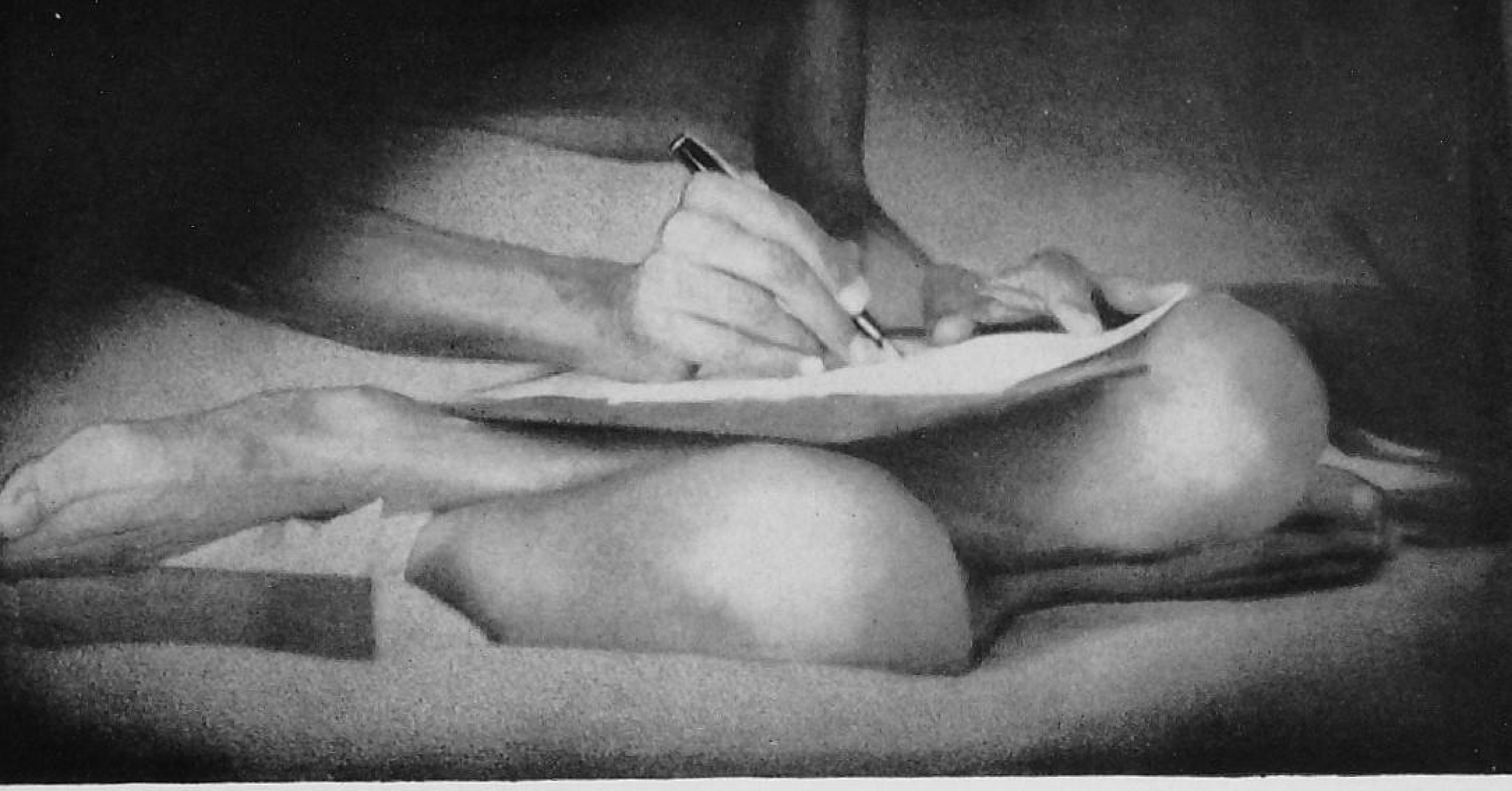


Photograph : Margaret Bourke-White

Spinning the destiny of India

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Those untiring hands



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Pouring out his soul

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Characteristic postures

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

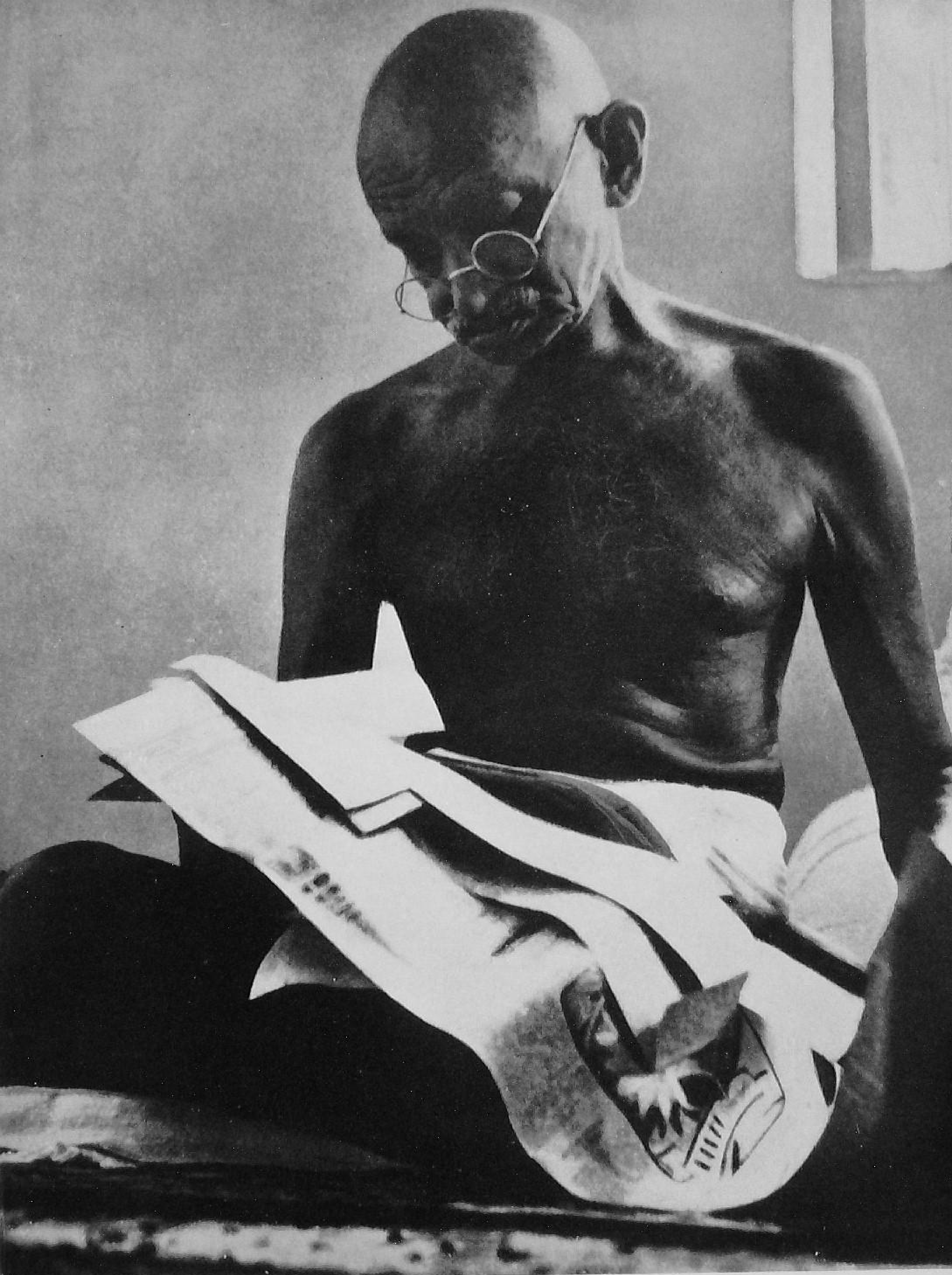
The strong stride

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

India

Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

That creative hand



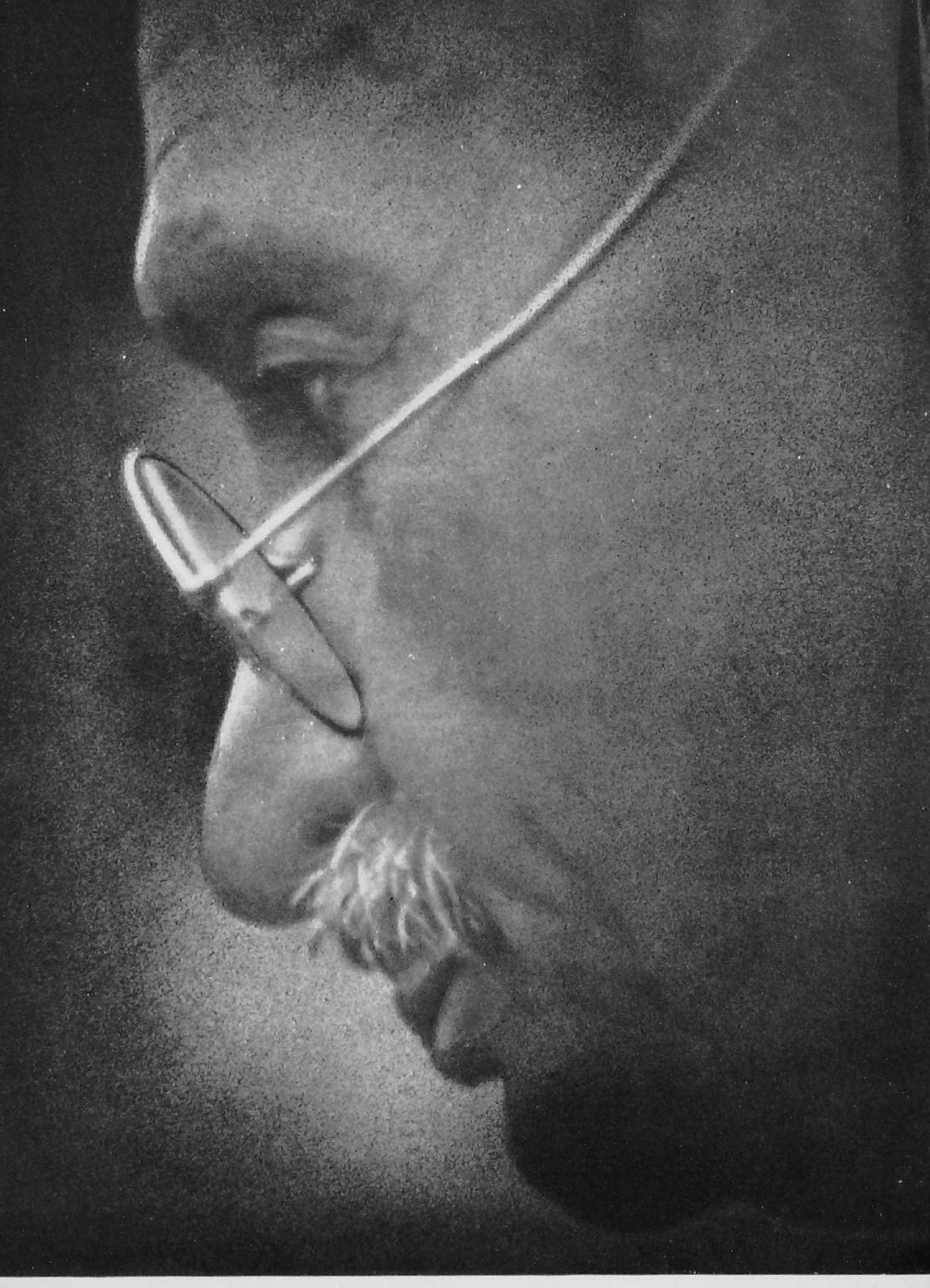
Photograph : Margaret Bourke-White

Studying events: veteran editor

Study in serenity

Photographs : D. R. D. Wadia

nd watchfulness



Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

Profile

Photograph : Margaret Bourke-White

Ramdhun

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Hands that moulded millions

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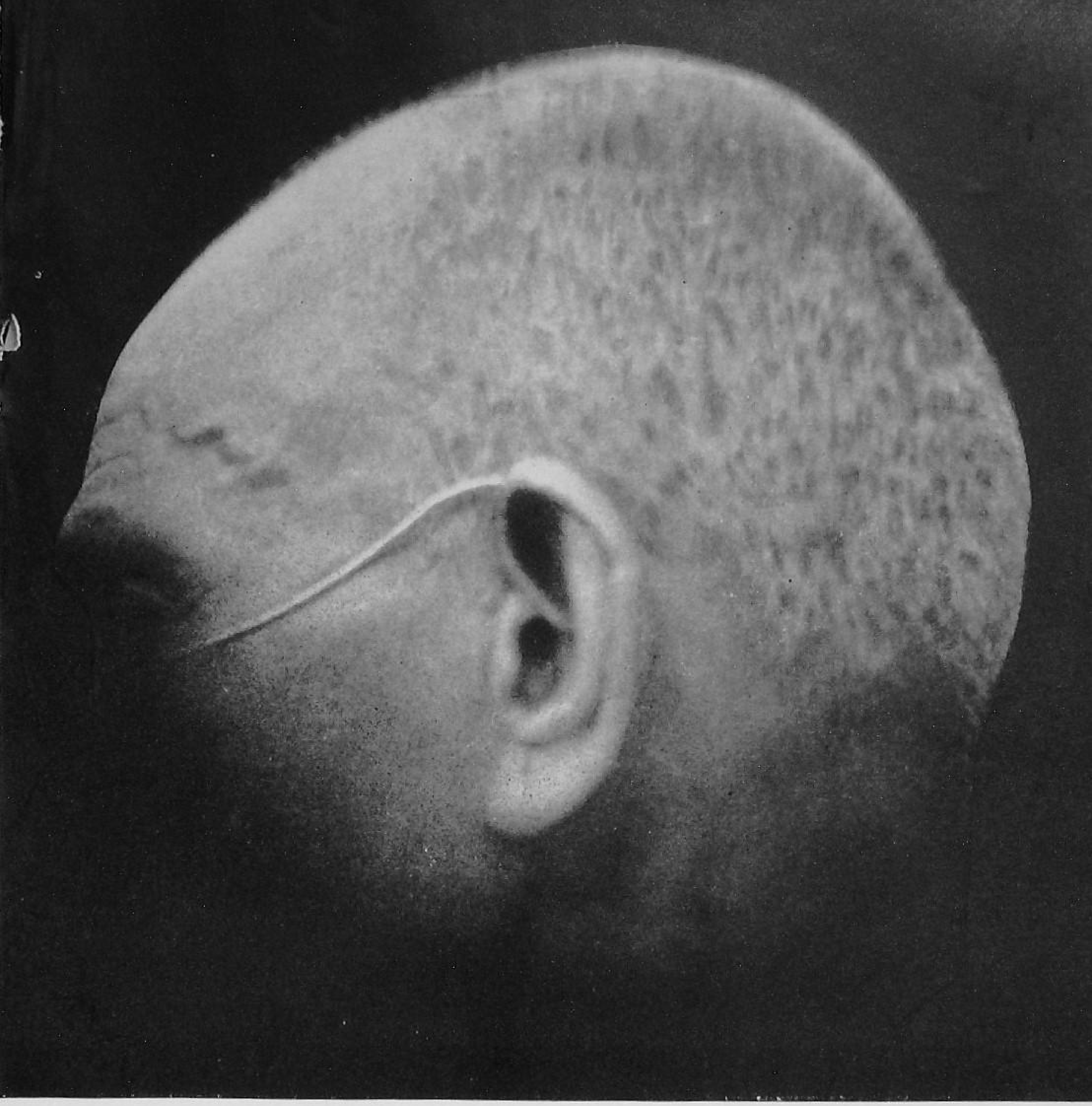
Firm grip

The familiar outline



Photographs : D. R. D. Wadia

Sculptor's dream

Domed

majesty

How the millions

Courtesy : Kanu Gandhi

addressed him

Courtesy : Kanu Gandhi

"Dictator of the Government of India"

Let Me Magnify My Cross

1947

CONGRATULATORY greetings kept pouring in. In his prayer speech of October 3, 1947, Gandhi referred to several birthday messages from Muslim friends too. But he did not consider that the present time was opportune to publish them, as it was not likely to benefit the general public, who today did not believe in ahimsa and truth. Evil-doers, he held, were equally guilty, whoever they were.

He referred to a kind Frenchman, who had, while congratulating him, tried to persuade him to wish to live for 125 years, in order to finish his work. The Frenchman said that he had achieved so much and, after all, if God was responsible for every happening, He would bring good out of evil. The speaker should not be sad or depressed. He said he could not deceive himself by kind words. Today, he felt that what he might have achieved in the past, had to be forgotten. No one could live on his past. He could wish to live, only if he felt that he could render service to the people. That meant, the people saw the error of their ways and they listened to his words. He was in God's hands. If God wished to take further work from him, He would do so. But he certainly felt that, today, his words had ceased to carry weight, and if he was not able to render more service, it would be best that God took him away.

Under "Apt Lines", he published in *Harijan* the following:

It is by my fetters that I can fly;
It is by my sorrows that I can soar;
It is by my reverses that I can run;
It is by my tears that I can travel;
It is by my Cross that I can climb
  into the heart of humanity;
Let me magnify my Cross, O God!

In his prayer speech on the 4th, Gandhi said that at the Kurukshetra Camp, the refugees were Hindus and Sikhs. Their number

was 25,000, and it was daily increasing. Tents had been erected to house the refugees, but they were not enough to give shelter to all of them. The diet was enough to prevent death from starvation, but it was not a balanced diet, and it was already resulting in malnutrition and lowered the resistance to disease. He was constrained to say that the suffering of humanity could have been greatly minimized, if one side at least had retained sanity. The spirit of revenge and retaliation had started a vicious circle, and it brought hardships on increasing numbers. The Hindus and the Muslims seemed today to vie with each other in cruelty. Even women, children and the aged were not spared. He had worked hard for the independence of India and he had prayed to God to let him live up to 125 years, so that he could see the establishment of Ram Raj, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, in India. But, today, there was no such prospect before them. The people had taken the law into their own hands. Was he to be a helpless witness of the tragedy? He prayed to God to give him the strength to make them see their error and mend it, or else remove him. Time was, when their love for him made them follow him implicitly. Their affection had not, perhaps, died down, but his appeal to their reason and hearts, seemed to have lost its force. Was it that they had use for him, only while they were slaves, and had none in an independent India? Did independence mean good-bye to civilization and to humanity? He could not give them any other message now, than the one he had proclaimed from the house-tops all these years.

His purpose for the evening was to draw attention of his hearers to the approaching cold weather, which was very severe in Delhi and in the Punjab. He appealed to all who could afford to donate warm blankets or quilts they could spare. Even thick cotton sheets could be sent. They should be washed and mended, if necessary, before sending. The Hindus and the Muslims should all co-operate in this humanitarian task. He would like them not to earmark anything for any particular community. They should rest assured that all their gifts would be distributed to the deserving people only. He hoped that the gifts would begin to pour in from the next day. It was not possible for the Government to provide blankets to lakhs and lakhs of homeless human beings. The crores of India had to come to the rescue of their unfortunate brethren. In response to his appeal for the blankets, two friends had sent two good blankets and

another had sent ten more. He assured the donors that they would be given to deserving people.

He had received a telegram saying that, if the Hindus and Sikhs had not retaliated, probably, even he would not be alive today. He considered this suggestion preposterous. His life was in God's good hands, as theirs was. No one could put an end to it, till God permitted it. It was not for human beings to save his life, or that of anyone else. The telegram further said that ninety-eight per cent of the Muslims were traitors and would betray India in favour of Pakistan, at a given moment. He did not believe it. Muslim masses in the villages could not be treacherous. Supposing, that they were, they would destroy Islam. If the charge could be proved, the Government would deal with them. He was convinced that if the Hindus and Muslims continued to be enemies of one another, it was bound to lead to war, which would mean the ruin of both the dominions. It was the duty of the Government to offer protection to all, who looked up to it, wherever they were and to whatever religion they belonged. Ultimately, protection of one's faith lay with oneself.

Gandhi then referred to Mr. Churchill's speech, in which he had attacked the Labour Government for bringing ruin upon India. He said that they had liquidated the empire and brought misery upon India's masses. He was afraid the same fate would befall Burma. Was the wish father to the thought? asked Gandhi. Mr. Churchill was a great man. It hurt him, that he should have spoken in that manner again. He put party, before the nation. India consisted of seven lakhs of villages. These seven lakhs of villages had not run amuck. But supposing, that they did, would that be a justification for reducing India to slavery? Was it only the good, who had the right to freedom? It was the British who had taught us, that freedom with drunkenness was preferable to slavery with sobriety. We were rightly taught that self-government included the right to misgovernment, and that good government was no substitute for self-government. Socialism was Mr. Churchill's *bete noire*. Labour could not be other than socialist. Socialism was a great doctrine. It did not admit of condemnation, but wise application. The socialists may be bad, not socialism. The victory of the Labour Party in Great Britain was the victory of socialism. The Labour Government was a government by labour. He had long held the view that when labour realized its dignity, it would eclipse all other parties. Labour had

withdrawn British power from India by the consent of all parties. It ill became Mr. Churchill to quarrel with the great act. Supposing that he succeeded at the next election, surely he did not dream that he would undo the act and compel India to a second dose of slavery. He would have to face a living wall of opposition. Did he for one moment think, how shameful was the act of the annexation of Burma? Did he remember the way, in which India was brought under subjection? He did not wish to open the dark chapter. The less said about it, the better. While he said all this, he did not want his hearers to forget that their dearly won liberty, might be lost to the world powers, if they continued to act like beasts, rather than men. He did not wish to be a living witness of the tragedy, if it was to overtake them. Who was he to save India single-handed? But he did want his hearers to falsify Mr. Churchill's forebodings.

On October 6, his written address was read out at the meeting:

"Those who ought to know all about our food have gathered together on the invitation of Rajendra Prasad, to give him the benefit of their advice in this grave food crisis. Any mistake made on this important matter, may mean starvation and death of millions therefrom. India is not unfamiliar with the starvation and death of tens of thousands, if not millions, due to famine, natural or man-made. I claim, that in a well-ordered society, there should always be pre-arranged methods of successful treatment of scarcity of water, and of food crops. This is, however, not the occasion for describing a well-ordered society, and for showing how it would deal with the matter. Our concern, for the present, is to see, whether we can, with fair hope of success, deal with the present food crisis.

"I think, we can. The first lesson, that we must learn, is of self-help and self-reliance. If we assimilate this lesson, we shall at once free ourselves from disastrous dependence upon foreign countries and ultimate bankruptcy. This is not said in arrogance, but as a matter of fact. We are not a small country, dependent for its food supply upon the outside help. We are a sub-continent, a nation of nearly 400 millions. We are a country of mighty rivers and a rich variety of agricultural land, with inexhaustible cattle wealth. That our cattle give much less milk than we need, is entirely our own fault. Our cattle wealth is any day capable of giving us all the milk we need. Our country, if she had not been neglected during the past few centuries, should, today, not only be providing herself with

sufficient food, she would also be playing a useful role in supplying the outside world with much-needed foodstuffs, of which the late war has unfortunately left practically the whole world in want. This does not exclude India. The distress is growing, instead of showing signs of decreasing. My suggestion does not include ungrateful rejection of free supply, that any foreign country may wish to offer us. All I say is, that we must not go a-begging. It demoralizes. Add to this the difficulty of internal transport of foodstuffs, from one place to another. We have not the requisite facility for rapid movement of grains and other foodstuffs. Further add not the remote possibility of delivery of uneatable stuff. We dare not lose sight of the fact that we have to deal with human nature. In no part of the world, it is to be found perfect, or even very nearly so.

"Next, let us see, what possible foreign aid we can get. I am told not more than three per cent of our present wants. If this information is correct, and I have had it checked by several experts, who confirm the figure, I am sure the case for reliance on the outside help falls to the ground. The slightest dependence on outside help is likely to deflect us from trying to the fullest extent our immense internal possibilities, in the shape of utilizing every inch of arable land for growing crops for our daily food, in the place of growing money crops. We must reclaim the waste land, which is capable of being placed under immediate cultivation.

"Centralization of the foodstuffs, I apprehend, is ruinous. Decentralization easily deals a blow to blackmarketing, and saves time and money in transport, to and fro. Moreover, the villager, who grows India's cereals and pulses, knows how to save his crops against the rodents. The movement of grain, from station to station, makes it liable to be eaten by the rodents. This costs the country many millions, and deprives it of tons of grain, every ounce of which we need badly. If every Indian were to realize the necessity of growing food, wherever food can be grown, we should most probably forget that there was scarcity of the foodstuffs in the land. I have by no means dealt fully with the fascinating and absorbing subject of growing more food, but I hope that I have said enough to stimulate interest and turn the wise towards the thought of how every individual can help in the laudable enterprise.

"Let me now show how to deal with the three per cent of grains we might possibly get from outside. The Hindus observe a fast or a

semi-fast, every eleventh day per fortnight. The Muslims and others are not prohibited from denying themselves, especially, when it is for the sake of the starving millions. If the whole nation realized the beauty of this partial self-denial, India would more than cover the deficit, caused by the voluntary deprivation of foreign aid.

"Personally, I hold that rationing has very limited use, if any. If the producers were left to themselves, they would bring their produce to the market and everyone would get good and eatable grain, which today is not easily obtainable.

"I shall conclude this hurried review of the food crisis by drawing attention to President Truman's reported advice to the American people that they should eat less bread, and thus save the much-needed grain for starving Europe. He added that Americans would not lose in health by the recommended act of self-denial. I tender my congratulations to President Truman, on this philanthropic gesture. I must decline to endorse the suggestion that, at the back of this philanthropy, there is a sordid motive of deriving a pecuniary advantage for America. A man must be judged by his action, not the motive prompting it. God alone knows man's heart. If America would deny herself for the sake of hungry Europe, should we fail to do this little act of self-denial for ourselves? If many must die of starvation, let us at least earn the credit of having done our best in the way of self-help, which ennobles a nation.

"Let us hope that the committee that Dr. Rajendra Prasad has called together, will not disperse without presenting a workable solution of the food crisis that faces the country."

On October 7, referring to his remarks about the food control, he stated that he was convinced that his suggestion would remove the major part of the problem of the food shortage, within twenty-four hours. Whether the experts would accept it or not, was a different question. Many people came and talked to him and left literature with him to the effect that the popular ministers were acting in an autocratic fashion, like their British predecessors. He had not talked to the ministers in this connection. But he was quite clear that nothing for which they had criticized the British Government, should happen in the regime of responsible ministries. Under British rule, the Viceroy could issue ordinances for making laws and executing them. There was a hue and cry against the combination of judicial and executive functions. Nothing had happened since, to warrant

a change in the opinion. There should be no ordinance rule. Their legislative assemblies should be their only law-makers. The ministers were liable to be changed at will. Their acts should be subject to review by their courts. They should do all in their power to make justice cheap, expeditious and incorruptible. For that purpose, the panchayat raj had been suggested. It was not possible for a High Court to reach lakhs and lakhs of people. Only extraordinary situations required emergency legislation. Legislative assemblies, even though the procedure might entail some delay, must not be superseded by the executive. He had no concrete example in mind. He based his remarks upon the correspondence he had received from various provinces. Therefore, while he appealed to the people not to take the law into their own hands, he appealed to the ministers to beware of lapsing into the old ways, which they had condemned.

To the people, he appealed once again to be loyal and faithful to their Governments and, to strengthen them or dismiss them, which they had every right to do. Jawaharlalji was a real *jawahar*, jewel. He could never be party to Hindu Raj, nor could the Sardar, who had championed Muslim friends. If Jawaharlal, the Sardar, and the people with their ideas, had forfeited their respect and confidence, they could replace them by another team, that had their confidence. But they could not and should not expect them to act against their conscience, and regard that India belonged only to the Hindus. That way lay destruction.

Gandhi watched with deep sorrow the plight of the refugees and gave advice to the people from Delhi, where his stay had to be prolonged, in order to help the Nehru Government. One of the greatest migrations of history was nearing its completion, as the 400,000 foot convoy of the uprooted non-Muslim population of the fertile areas in the West Punjab was pouring over the Pakistan border into India. Already, three lakhs of Muslim refugees had migrated into Pakistan and over a lakh Hindu refugees into India.

Addressing the prayer meeting on October 9, Gandhi observed that he was grateful to the people for giving him a patient hearing, but that was not enough. His advice, if it was worth listening to, should be acted upon. The Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan were in a terrible plight. Evacuation was a difficult process. Many must die on the way. After coming across to the Union, their condition in the refugee camps was none too enviable. There was the camp at

Kurukshetra, where thousands lay under the sky. The medical facilities were inadequate, nutrition poor. It would be wrong to blame the Government. What advice was he to give to the people? Some friends from Western Pakistan had seen him during the day. They had narrated to him their tale of woe and had pleaded for speedy evacuation of those left behind. He was not the Government. But, with all the will in the world, no government would be able to do all that it wanted to do, in such extraordinary circumstances. News came from East Bengal, that people had started fleeing from there too. He did not know the reason. His co-workers were still there. He himself had toured through Noakhali and tried to impress upon the people to shed all fear. It made him think of the duty of the people and that of the Government. Those who were fleeing from one dominion might imagine that the conditions on the other side would be much better. But they were mistaken. With all the will in the world, the authorities would not be able to cope with so many refugees. They could not reproduce the original condition. The only advice that he could give to the people was to stick to their places and to look to none but God for their protection. They would die courageously, if they must, in their own homes. Naturally, it would be the duty of the other Government to ask for the safety of the minorities. It was the duty of both the Governments to act correctly and in co-operation. If that desirable thing did not happen, then the logical result would be war. He was the last person to advocate it. But he knew that the governments which possessed the arms and armies, could not act in any other way. Any such procedure would mean annihilation. Death in the process of exchange of population did no good to anyone. The exchange raised tremendous problems of relief and rehabilitation.

Gandhi announced on October 10, that more blankets had been received. There was also donation of some money and a gold ring for that purpose. He had received a telegram from Baroda informing him that 800 blankets were ready for dispatch and many more could be sent, if railway permit could be secured. He hoped at this rate, there would be enough blankets to save the refugees from the ravages of the cold weather.

He then referred to the shortage of food and cloth in the country. With the advent of independence, the problems appeared to have become more acute than before. He was unable to understand the

reason thereof. These were not the signs of independence. Indian independence was all the more precious for the reason that their means of achieving it had commanded universal appreciation. The fight they gave, was bloodless. Such independence should help them to solve their problems more speedily than before.

As for food, the system of control and rationing, in his opinion, was unnatural and unbusinesslike. They had plenty of fertile land; there was enough water and no dearth of man-power. Why should there be food shortage, under these circumstances? People should be educated to become self-reliant. And once they knew that they had to stand on their own legs, it would electrify the atmosphere. It was well known, that fright took a larger toll of life, than actual disease. He wanted them to shed all fear of calamity, by taking the natural step of self-help. He was convinced that the removal of food control would not result in a famine and deaths from starvation.

Similarly, there was no reason why there should be shortage of cloth in India. She produced more cotton than she required for her wants. People should spin and weave themselves. He was, therefore, for the removal of cloth control too. That might result in increase of prices. He was told and he believed that, if the people abstained from buying cloth for at the most six months, the abstention was bound to result in a natural fall in prices. And he had suggested that, in case of need, in the meantime, the people should produce their own khadi. He did not, at the present stage, bring in his belief in the use of khadi, to the exclusion of any other cloth. Once the people began to produce their own food and cloth, it would change their entire outlook. Today, they had gained political independence only. By following his advice, they would gain economic independence also, and that would be felt by every villager. There would be then no time or inclination left, for fighting amongst themselves. It would result in elimination of other vices, like drinking, gambling, etc. The people would gain in every sense of the term. God would also help them, for He helped those, who helped themselves.

During the day, the Food Committee met in Gandhi's room, when the members of the committee and officials of the Food Department attended and sought his advice on the solution of the food problem. "We have plenty of fertile lands and large man-power," Gandhi said. "If the Government utilize these two, then in six months' time, there would be no necessity for continuing the controls."

On October 11, he referred to the statement that Mr. Mandal and other members of the Pakistan Government had decided that the Harijans would be expected to wear a badge, showing that they were untouchables. The badge had to have a sign of the crescent and the star. This was intended to distinguish the Harijans from the other Hindus. The logical consequence of this, in his opinion, would be that those Harijans who did stay there, would ultimately have to embrace Islam. He had nothing to say against a change of faith out of heart-felt conviction and spiritual urge. Having become a Harijan by choice, he knew the mind of the Harijans. There was not a single Harijan today, who could fall in that category. What did they understand of Islam? Nor did they understand, why they were Hindus. This was true of the followers of all faiths. They were what they were, because they were born in a particular faith. And if they changed their religion, it would be merely from compulsion, or some temptations held out to them in return. In the present atmosphere, no voluntary change of faith should have any validity. Religion should be dearer than life itself. Those who acted up to the truth were better Hindus, than one well versed in the Hindu scriptures, but whose faith did not hold out at the time of a crisis.

In the end, he referred to the proposed launching of satyagraha in South Africa. Satyagraha had been going on for some time. It had been suspended for some time. India's case was before the U.N.O. and the Indians, both the Hindus and the Muslims, in South Africa, had decided to restart their satyagraha the following day. His advice to them was to seek the assistance of both the Indian Union and the Pakistan Governments, and it was the duty of both the Governments to give all possible assistance and encouragement to the Indians in South Africa. Conditions for successful satyagraha were, that the cause must be just and the means fully non-violent. If the Indians in South Africa observed these, success was bound to be theirs.

On October 12, Gandhi said that he had received more blankets and promises of quilts, during the day. Some mills were also getting quilts ready for the refugees. Unlike blankets, quilts would get wet with dew. But an easy way out of it was, to cover them with the old newspapers at night. The advantage of quilts was, that they could be stripped, cloth washed and the cotton refilled.

Those who invoked God's assistance, could turn even misfortune to good account. There were some amongst the refugees, who were

embittered by their sufferings. They were angry. But anger did not help. They were well-to-do people. They had lost their all. So long as they did not return to their homes with honour and dignity and assurance of safety, they had to do the best they could in the camp life. Contemplated return was, therefore, a long-range programme. What were they to do in the meantime? He was told that seventy-five per cent of those who had come from Pakistan, were traders. They could not all expect to start business in the Indian Union. That would upset the whole economy of the Union. They had to learn to work with their hands. As for the people with professions, as for instance, doctors, nurses, etc., there should be no difficulty in finding work for them. Those who had felt driven from Pakistan should know that they were the citizens of the whole of India, not merely of the Punjab, N.- W. F. P., or Sind. The condition was that wherever they went, they should so mix with the inhabitants there, as sugar with milk. In their dealings, they should be industrious and honest. They must realize that they were born to serve India and add to her glory, never to degrade her. They should refuse to waste their time in gambling, or drinking, or quarrelling among themselves. It was human to err, but it was also given to human beings to learn from their mistakes and not to repeat them. If they followed his advice, they would be an asset wherever they went, and the people in every province would welcome them with open arms.

He went on pleading for toleration. During his prayer speeches, which were broadcast, he dealt with the pressing problems of the day. He had seen a paragraph in the press, saying that henceforth the official language of the United Province would be Hindi with Devanagari script. It hurt him. Of all the Muslims in the Indian Union, nearly one-fourth resided in U.P. There were many Hindus like Sapru, who were Urdu scholars. Were they to forget the Urdu script? The right thing would be to keep both the scripts and make the use of either, acceptable in all the official dealings. This would result in the compulsory learning of both the scripts. The language then would take care of itself, and Hindustani would become the language of the province. This knowledge of the two scripts would not be a waste. It would enrich them and enrich their language. No one should cavil at such a step.

They should treat the Muslims, as equal citizens. And equality of treatment demanded respect for the Urdu script. They must not

produce a state, in which respectable life was impossible, and still claim that they did not want the Muslims to go. In spite of really equal treatment, if the Muslims chose to go to Pakistan, it was their own look-out. There should be nothing in their behaviour to scare away the Muslims. They should be correct in their conduct. Then they could serve India and save Hinduism. They could not do so by killing the Muslims, or driving them away, or suppressing them in any way. They had to do the right thing, irrespective of what happened in Pakistan.

In his prayer speech on October 17, he referred to letters and messages from friends, expressing their concern over his persistent cough. His speech was broadcast, and so was the cough, which was often troublesome in the evening and in the open. For the last four days, however, the cough had been on the whole less troublesome and he hoped that it would soon disappear completely. The reason for the persistence of the cough had been, that he had refused all medical treatment. Dr. Sushila Nayyar had said that, if at the outset he had taken penicillin, he would have been all right in three days. Otherwise, it would take him three weeks to get over it. He did not doubt the efficacy of penicillin, but he believed too that Ramanam was the sovereign remedy for all ills and, therefore, superseded all other remedies. In the midst of the flames that surrounded him on all sides, there was all the greater need for a burning faith in God. God alone could enable the people to put down the fire. If He had to take work from him, He would keep him alive. Otherwise He would carry him away.

They had just heard the *bhajan*, in which the poet had exhorted man to stick to Ramanam. He alone was the refuge of man. Therefore, in the present crisis, he wished to throw himself entirely on God, and not accept medical aid for a physical ailment.

The committee appointed by Dr. Rajendra Prasad had ended its deliberations. It was to consider the question of food only. Gandhi had expressed his opinion sometime ago, that the control over food and cloth should be removed, without further delay. War was over, and yet the prices were going up. There was food in the country and cloth too. Yet it did not reach the people. It was, indeed, a sad state of affairs. The Government was trying to spoon-feed the people. Instead of that, the people should be thrown on their own resources. The Civil Service was used to carrying on work from their offices.

The red tape and the files controlled their activity. They had never come in contact with the peasants. They did not know them. He wished they would be humble enough to recognize the change, that had come over the people. Their initiative should not be strangled by the controls. The people should be allowed to be self-reliant. Democracy should not result in making them helpless. Supposing that the worst fears were realized, and the removal of controls made the situation worse, there was nothing to prevent them from reverting to controls. Personally he believed, that it would greatly ease the situation. People would begin to exert themselves to solve their problems and have little time to quarrel among themselves.

A correspondent wrote: "It would be well not to discuss, even by way of joke, the possibility of a war between our two states. But you have gone so far, as to express the opinion that in the event of a war between the two, the Muslims of the Union should fight against those of Pakistan. Does it not then follow, that Hindus and other non-Muslims should do likewise? Now, if such a war arises out of the communal question, no argument is likely to make the Muslims of the Union fight those of Pakistan, and, likewise, the Hindus and the Sikhs of Pakistan. If, however, a war takes place between the two states, for other than the communal cause, you will not contend that the Hindus of Pakistan and the Muslims of the Union should fight Pakistan." To this, Gandhi editorially replied:

"It is undoubtedly true that the possibility of a war between the two states should not be discussed by way of a joke. The adverb 'even' does not fit in. For, if the possibility be a reality, it would be a duty to discuss it. It might be folly, not to do so.

"It is my firm opinion, that the rule that applies to the Muslims of the Union must, in the same circumstance, apply to the Hindus and other non-Muslims of Pakistan. I have expressed this view in my after-prayer speeches, as also in my talks with friends here.

"Of course, behind the opinion lies a train of reasoning. Loyalty cannot be evoked to order. If circumstances do not warrant it, it may be said to be impossible to achieve. There is a large number of people, who do not believe in the possibility of such genuine loyalty and hence laugh out my opinion. Surely, there is nothing to laugh at in conceiving such a possibility. The Muslims of the Union will fight those of Pakistan, when they regard it as a duty, or in other words, when it is clear to them that they are being fairly treated in

the Union and that the non-Muslims are not so treated in Pakistan. Such a state is not beyond the range of possibility.

"Similarly, if the non-Muslims of Pakistan clearly feel that they are being fairly treated in Pakistan, and that they can reside there in safety, and yet the Hindus of the Union maltreat the minorities, the minorities of Pakistan will naturally fight the majority in the Union. Then the minorities will not need any argument to induce them to do their duty.

"It was our misfortune, that the country was divided into two parts. The division was avowedly by reason of a religious cleavage. Behind it, might be economic and other causes. They could not have brought out the cleavage. The poison that fills the air arose also from the same communal cause. Irreligion masquerades as religion. It sounds nice to say that it would have been better, if there had been no communal question. But how could the fact be undone?

"It has been repeatedly asked whether, in the event of a war between the two states, the Muslims of the Union will fight against the Muslims of Pakistan, and the Hindus of one against those of the other. However unlikely it may appear at present, there is nothing inherently impossible in the conception. There is any day more risk in distrusting the profession of loyalty than in trusting it, and courageously facing the danger of trusting. The question can be more convincingly put in this way: Will the Hindus ever fight the Hindus and the Muslims their co-religionists, for the sake of truth and justice? It can be answered by a counter question. Does not history provide such instances?

"In solving the puzzle, the great stumbling block in the way is that truth is at a discount. Let us hope that in this holocaust, some there are, who will stand firm in their faith in the victory of truth."

At the prayer meeting on October 19th, Gandhi posed the question : how were they to quench the flames? They had to be correct in their behaviour, irrespective of what the others did. He was not unaware of the sufferings of the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. But knowing that, he wanted to overlook them. Otherwise, he would go mad. He would not be able to serve India. They were to look upon the Muslims in the Indian Union, as their blood brothers. Delhi was said to be at peace. It brought him little solace. It was due to the presence of the military and the police. There was no love lost between the Hindus and Muslims. The hearts were still estranged.

He did not know, whether there were any Muslims in the meeting. If there was any, he did not know, whether he felt at home. Sheikh Saheb and some Muslim friends were at the prayer meeting, the day before. So was the widow of Kidwai Saheb's brother, who, for no fault of his, was murdered in cold blood in Mussoorie. He confessed that he was uneasy about their presence, not because he was at all anxious about their persons. He flattered himself with the belief that no harm could befall them in his presence. But, he was not equally sure, that they could not be insulted. He would have to hang his head in shame, if they were insulted in any way. Why should there be any such fear about the Muslim brethren? Surely, they should feel as safe among them, as they themselves. This could not happen, until they learnt the art of magnifying their own faults and minimizing those of their neighbours. All eyes rested on India, which had become the hope of Asia and Africa, nay, of the whole world. If India was to realize the hope, it had to stop the fratricide and all Indians had to live like friends and brothers. Clean hearts were the first condition of that happy state.

On Monday, October 20, his message was read out at the prayer gathering:

"The Rajkumari informed me last night after prayers that a Muslim Health Officer was butchered yesterday, while he was on duty. He was a good, conscientious officer. He leaves a widow and children. The widow was so distracted, that her one wish was she and her children were also similarly butchered, now that their caretaker and bread-winner was removed from their midst by cruel hands.

"I told you only the last evening, that all was not well with Delhi, as it appeared on the surface. So long as tragedies, such as I have described, continue to occur, there is little ground for rejoicing over the silence that reigns on the surface in Delhi. Is it the silence of the grave, as was once said of the surface silence, during his Viceroyalty by the then Lord Irwin, now Lord Halifax?

"The Rajkumari added that it was no easy task to get together a sufficient number of Muslim friends, who would perform the burial rites in strict accord with the Koran.

"This narrative must cause any sensitive mind, as it causes me, a shudder. Should Delhi come to such a pass? It is a sure sign of cowardice for the majority to dread a minority, however powerful it might be.

"I hope, the authorities will trace the perpetrators of the crime and bring them to justice.

"If it was the last of such crimes, I should have little to say, deplorable though even such a crime would always be. But I fear that it is a pointer. The conscience of Delhi must be quickened by it.

"It is my painful duty to draw your attention to another menace, if it be one. A Britisher writes in an open letter, 'To whom it may concern': 'Several of us are living in a lonely spot in a disturbed area. We are pure British and for years have devoted ourselves at great personal sacrifice to the welfare of the people of this country. We now find that a secret word has gone out, that all the British left in India are to be murdered. I read in the newspapers Pandit Nehru's assurance that the Government will protect the person and property of all loyal citizens of the state. But there is no protection for persons living in little country places, or almost none. None at all for us. It is a physical impossibility.'

"There is much else in this open letter which can be quoted with advantage. I have reproduced here enough to warn us of the lurking danger. Of course, it may be only a scare, and there may be nothing beyond it, and there may be no secret circular. There is, however, prudence in not disregarding such warnings. I am hoping that the writer's fears are altogether groundless. I agree with him that all promise of protection by authority in isolated places is vain. It simply cannot be done, no matter how efficient the military and the police machine may be, which, it must be admitted, it is not, at the moment. Protection must come first from within, from the rock-like faith in God, and secondly, from the goodwill of the neighbouring population. If neither is present, the best and the safest way is to leave India's inhospitable shore. Things have not come to such a pass. The duty of all of us is to regard with special attention all the Britishers who had chosen to remain in India as her faithful servants. They must be free from every kind of insult or disregard. The press and public bodies have to be circumspect in this, as in many other respects, if we are to render a good account of ourselves, as a free and self-respecting nation. Those who respect themselves, can never make good the claim, if they will not respect their neighbours, however few or insignificant, they may be."

The following day, Gandhi said that he had heard of another sad incident. It was not a communal murder. The victim was a Hindu

government officer. A soldier shot him dead, because he would not act as he was directed. This tendency to use the gun on the slightest pretext was a grave portent. There were barbarous people in the world, with whom life had no value. They shot dead human beings, as they would shoot down birds or beasts. Was free India to be in that category? Man had not the power to create life, hence he had no right to take it. Yet the Muslims murdered the Hindus and the Sikhs, and vice versa. When this cruel game was finished, the blood lust was bound to result in the Muslims slaughtering the Muslims and the Hindus and Sikhs slaughtering the members of their own communities themselves. He hoped that they would never reach that savage state. That was their fate, unless both the states pulled themselves together and set things right, before it was too late.

He then referred to another question. In some places, authority had arrested several people, who were implicated in rioting. Under the old regime, people appealed to the Viceroy for clemency, who had to follow prescribed rules, however faulty they were. Now they appealed to their ministers. Were the ministers to act according to their own sweet will? He thought not. The ministers could not act capriciously. They were bound to let the law take its own course. The clemency of the state had a definite place and had to be exercised under due safeguard. The only way, such cases could be withdrawn was by complainants appealing to the courts concerned to release the prisoners concerned. Heinous crimes did not admit of such easy discharges. In such cases, it was not enough for the complainants to abstain from giving evidence against the accused. The latter had to confess their crimes and ask for mercy. And if there was sincere co-operation from the complainants, free pardon was a possibility. What he wanted to stress here was that no minister had the right to interfere with the course of justice, even for his dearest ones. It was the function of democracy to make justice cheap and expeditious and to ensure all possible purity in the administration. But, for the ministers to dare to replace or to influence courts of justice was the very negation of democracy and law.

A friend had warned the speaker that as his prayer addresses were recorded on the All-India Radio, he should not talk for more than fifteen minutes at the outside. He appreciated the warning. He had, therefore, cut down further remarks and he hoped thenceforth to follow the practice.

On the 22nd, Gandhi said that a friend had read out a passage from an Urdu daily to him in the afternoon. He hardly ever read the Urdu newspapers. He knew Urdu, but he could not read it with the required ease. Friends read out to him passages from the Urdu newspapers, from time to time. In the paragraph that was read out to him that day, the editor had stated among other inciting things that the Hindus were determined to turn out the Muslims from the Indian Union. They must either go, or have their heads cut off. He hoped that it reflected the opinion of the editor only. If it reflected the opinion of a substantial section of the public, it was a matter of great shame and anxiety for the very existence of the Union. He had told them the consequences of this ruinous policy, the previous evening. It was bound to lead to the Hindus and the Sikhs killing each other ultimately. A friend had told him that a start in that direction had already been made. The newspapers had taken the place of the Gita, the Bible and the Koran with the people. For them the printed sheet was gospel truth. The fact threw a great responsibility on the editors and reporters. The kind of stuff that was read out to him that afternoon should never be allowed to be published. Such newspapers should be banned.

Another friend had spoken to him about the chaos that was to be found in the Indian states. The British exercised a certain amount of control over the states. With the lapse of paramountcy, that was gone. The Sardar had taken the place, but he had not the might of the British bayonet to help him. It was true that most of the states had acceded to the Indian Union. Nevertheless, they did not feel bound to the Central Government. Many fancied that they were freer than under British suzerainty to treat the ryots, as they chose. He himself belonged to a state and was a friend of the princes. As such, he wished to warn the princes that the only way to save themselves, was to become the real trustees for their people. They could not live as autocratic rulers. They could not annihilate their people. Whatever might be in store for India, if any of the princes dreamt of becoming the absolute rulers, they were greatly mistaken. The princes could only live on the goodwill of their people. The millions of India had resisted the might of the British Empire and won their freedom. Today, the masses seemed to have gone mad. Let not the princes follow suit. Autocracy, profligacy and drunkenness would lead them to sure ruin.

Lastly, he referred to the approaching festivals of Dussehra and Bakr Id. Everyone was anxious. In the Indian Union, trouble, if it arose, could only be started by the Hindus. He reminded them of the origin of the Dussehra festival. It was to commemorate the victory of Rama over Ravana. Durga Puja meant worship of the all-pervading Shakti. The ten days were followed by Bharat Milap. All this connoted self-restraint, not lenience. These nine days were the days of fasting and prayer. His mother used to fast during these nine days. They, her children, were taught to practise as much abstinence, as they could. Were they to celebrate the sacred occasion by killing and harassing their brothers? The Muslims in the Union, including the Nationalist Muslims, did not know what was in store for them on the morrow. Were they to live in the Union on pain of being forcibly converted? The last state was worse than the first. He had protested against forcible conversions of the Hindus and the Sikhs to Islam. He would expect them to prefer death to forcible conversions. The same thing applied to the Muslims. He had no use for people who could change their religion, like their clothes. They would not be an asset to any religion. Hinduism could never be saved by following any of the three alternatives. The only honourable way was for those in the Union to live as brothers. Let them cast off all enmity and bitterness on the occasion of these festivals. He then would proceed to Pakistan with renewed self-confidence. He could not be satisfied, until every Hindu and Sikh returned to his home in safety and honour, and the Muslims did likewise.

On October 23, he referred to another murder. A poor Muslim, who had a spectacles shop, went to open it hoping that things had at last settled down. He was murdered, as he was opening his shop. Why should such a thing happen? Where were the police and the military? The shop was not in a lonely place. Why did not any of the neighbours try to stop the act? He could understand the bitterness of the Hindus and Sikhs at the sufferings of their brethren in Pakistan. But the desire for revenge and retaliation must be checked. They must not degrade themselves by wreaking vengeance on the innocent Muslims in the Union. Delhi was as much the home of the Muslims, as of the Hindus and the Sikhs.

Prayer was held in the Delhi Central Jail on October 25th, for the sake of the prisoners of whom there were not less than 3,000. After the prayers, Gandhi told that he was very pleased when he

received an invitation to hold the prayer amidst prisoners. He was a seasoned ex-prisoner himself. He had served various terms in South Africa and in India. In South Africa, there were Indians described as coolies, Negroes, and the third class were Europeans. All the three were kept separately in jails. When there was an influx of the satyagrahis, they put Indians and Negroes in the same compound. Jail rules were strict and there was no distinction between political and non-political prisoners. They were all criminals. In a way, it was right. All those who broke the law, committed a crime against it.

In India, their struggle for independence was a mighty one and the topmost people took part in it. As a result, there was not only a distinction between the political and the non-political prisoners, but there were again A, B and C sections amongst the politicals. He did not believe in those divisions. He also believed that all men committed offences, big or small. Some were caught and put in jail. The others managed to escape detention. He was told by the chief jailor of an Indian jail that he often thought himself to be a bigger criminal than the prisoners under him. No one, however, would be able to deceive the biggest Jailor above.

What should their jails be like in free India? He had long held the opinion that all criminals should be treated as patients, and the jails should be hospitals, admitting this class of patients for treatment and cure. No one committed crime for the fun of it. It was a sign of a diseased mind. The causes of a particular disease should be investigated and removed. They need not have the palatial buildings, when the jails became hospitals. No country could afford that, much less could a poor country like India. But the outlook of the jail staff should be that of physicians and nurses in a hospital. The prisoners should feel that the officials were their friends. They were there to help them to regain their mental health, and not to harass them in any way. The popular governments have to issue necessary orders, but, meanwhile, the jail staff could do a little to humanize their administration. What was the duty of prisoners?

As an ex-prisoner, he would advise his fellow prisoners that they should behave as ideal prisoners. They should avoid breach of the jail discipline. They should put their heart and soul into whatever work was entrusted to them. For instance, the prisoners' food was cooked by themselves. They should clean the rice, *dal*, or whatever cereal was issued, so that there were no stones and grit or weevils

in them. Whatever complaints the prisoners might have, should be brought to the notice of the jail authorities in a becoming manner. They should so behave in their little community, as to become better men, when they left the jail, than when they entered it.

He had learnt that there were Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims among the prisoners. Let not the poison of communalism enter their ranks. They should all live together, as friends and brothers, so that when they went out, they might be able to check the madness outside. He wished Id Mubarak to all Muslim prisoners, and he hoped that non-Muslim prisoners would do likewise to their Muslim brethren.

Gandhi began his address on the 26th by referring to a letter in which a member of the audience had asked, whether it was any use saying that retaliation and revenge were wrong, when his followers, year after year, depicted Rama as burning the effigy of Ravana on the Dussehra day, and thus encouraged the sentiment of revenge. Gandhi replied that there were two fallacies in the question. He did not know who those followers were, unless it was he himself. Again, the interpretation of the ceremonial was quite wrong. It not only did not encourage private revenge, but it discouraged it by showing that it belonged exclusively to God, known to Hinduism as Rama. He was the sole infallible reader of men's hearts and, therefore, He knew who was Ravana. If everyone arrogated to himself the position of Rama, who would be Ravana? Imperfect men had no right to judge other imperfect men. It was unmanly and irreligious for the Hindus to lay their hands on the Muslims and vice versa. That way lay ruin of Hinduism and Islam. He was, therefore, glad that, as a sanatani Hindu, he represented not only the Hindus, but the Muslims and members of the other religions.

They might ask, whether he was aware of the sad happenings in Kashmir. He certainly was, so far as the newspapers gave the news. If newspaper reports were correct, the happenings in Kashmir were certainly bad. The charge was that the Pakistan Government was coercing Kashmir to join Pakistan. No one could coerce Kashmir or for that matter, Hyderabad, or little Junagadh, or any other state into joining one or the other dominion. What was the solution? He humbly put it to all the rajas and maharajas, that they were not the real rulers of their states. The present princes were the creation of the British imperialism. The British power had quitted India. The real rulers of all the states were their people, and their will must be

supreme. The rajas and maharajas would remain only as trustees. The people of Kashmir must decide, without any coercion or show of it from within or without, to which dominion it should belong. The rule was of universal application.

His speech of October 27 was read out at the prayer meeting:

"Complaints are being repeatedly made that the Muslims are being forced to leave their ancestral home in the Union and migrate to Pakistan. Thus, it is said that, in a variety of ways, they are being made to vacate their houses and live in camps, to await despatch by train, or even on foot. I am quite sure that such is not the policy of the Cabinet. When I tell the complainants about this, they laugh at it, and tell me in reply that either my information is incorrect, or that the services do not carry out the policy. I know that my information is quite correct. Are the services then disloyal? I hope not. Yet the complaint is universal. Various reasons are given for the alleged disloyalty. The most plausible one is, that the military and the police are largely divided on a communal basis, and that their members are carried away by the prevalent prejudice. I have given my opinion that, if these members, on whom depends the preservation of law and order, are affected by the communal taint, orderly government must give place to disorder and, if the latter persists, to disruption of society. It is up to the upper ranks of these services to rise superior to communalism and then to infect the lower ranks with the same healthy spirit.

"It is suggested with much force that the popular governments now established in the country have not the prestige, that the ability to overawe the Indian members of the services gave the foreign bureaucracy. This is only partly true. For, the popular Government wields the moral force, which is infinitely superior to the physical force, that the foreign government could summon to its assistance. This moral force presupposes the possession of the political morale that the popular support would give to an indigenous government. It may be lacking today. There is no means of checking it, save by the resignation of the ministry at the Centre. What we are examining specially this evening, is the condition of the Central authority. It must never be, and, what is perhaps more important, never feel weak. It must be conscious of its strength. Therefore, if it is at all true that there is the slightest insubordination among the services, the guilty ones must resign and give place to the one, who would

successfully deal with the official disorderliness. Whilst I voice, not without hesitation, the complaints that persistently come to me, I must cling to the hope that they have no bottom to them and that, if they have, the superior authority will satisfactorily deal with them, in so far as they have any justification.

"What is the duty of the affected citizens of the Indian Union? It is clear that there is no law that can compel a citizen to leave his place of residence. The authority will have to arm itself with special powers to issue orders, such as are alleged to have been given. So far as I am aware, there are no written orders issued to anyone. In the present case, thousands are involved in the alleged verbal orders. There is no helping those who will be frightened into submission to any order given by a person in uniform. My emphatic advice to all such persons is, that they should ask for written orders whose validity, in case of doubt, should be tested in a court of justice, if appeal to the final executive fails to give satisfaction.

"The public, in this case, representing the majority community—that hateful expression—should rigidly refrain from taking the law into their own hands. If they do not, they will be cutting the very branch, on which they are now sitting. It will be a fall, from which it will be difficult to rise. Let wisdom dawn on them, while there is yet time. Let them not be swayed by ugly events, even when the report thereof happens to be true. They must trust the representative ministers to do the needful for the vindication of justice."

In the midst of heavy engagements, he wrote an editorial, dated October 25, entitled "Of New Universities":

"There seem to be a mania for establishing the new universities in the provinces. Gujarat wants one for Gujarati, Maharashtra for Marathi, Carnatic for Kannad, Orissa for Oriya, Assam for Assami and what not. I do believe that there should be such universities, if these rich provincial languages and the people who speak them are to attain their full height.

"At the same time, I fear, we betray ourselves into undue haste, in accomplishing the object. The first step should be the linguistic political re-distribution of provinces. Their separate administration will naturally lead to the establishment of universities, where there are none. The Bombay province absorbs three languages: Gujarati, Marathi and Kannad, and, therefore, stunts their growth. Madras absorbs four: Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannad. Thus, there

is overlapping also. That Andhra Desh has an Andhra University is true. In my opinion, it does not occupy the place it would, if Andhra was a separate administrative unit, free from foreign control. India attained that freedom, only two months ago. The same thing can be said of the Annamalai University. Who can say that Tamil has come to its own in that university?

"There should be a proper background for the new universities. They should have the feeders in the shape of schools and colleges which will impart instruction through the medium of their respective provincial languages. Then only, can there be a proper milieu. University is at the top. A majestic top can only be sustained, if there is a sound foundation.

"Although we are politically free, we are hardly free from the subtle domination of the West. I have nothing to say to that school of politicians, who believe that knowledge can only come from the West. Nor do I subscribe to the belief, that nothing good can come out of the West. I do fear, however, that we are unable, as yet, to come to a correct decision in the matter. It is to be hoped that no one contends that because we seem to be politically free from the foreign domination, the mere fact gives us freedom from the more subtle influence of the foreign language and the foreign thought. Is it not wisdom, does not duty to the country dictate that, before we embark on new universities, we should stop and fill our own lungs first with the ozone of our newly got freedom? A university never needs a pile of majestic buildings and treasures of gold and silver. What it does need most of all, is the intelligent backing of public opinion. It should have a large reservoir of teachers to draw upon. Its founders should be far-seeing.

"In my opinion, it is not for a democratic state to find money for founding universities. If the people want them, they will supply the funds. Universities so founded, will adorn the country, which they represent. Where administration is in foreign hands, whatever comes to the people comes from top, and thus they become more and more dependent. Where it is broad-based on the popular will, everything goes from bottom upward, and hence it lasts. It is good looking and strengthens the people. In such a democratic scheme, money invested in the promotion of learning, gives a tenfold return to the people, even as a seed sown in good soil returns a luxuriant crop. Universities founded under the foreign domination have run

in the reverse direction. Any other result was impossible. Therefore, there is every reason for being cautious about founding new universities, till India has digested the newly acquired freedom.

"Then take the Hindu-Muslim question. The poison has assumed dangerous proportions, such that it is difficult to forecast where it will land us. Assume that the unthinkable has happened, and that not a single Muslim can remain in the Union safely and honourably and that neither the Hindu nor the Sikh can do likewise in Pakistan. Our education will then wear a poisonous form. If, on the other hand, the Hindus, the Muslims and all the others, who may belong to different faiths, can live in either of the dominions with perfect safety and honour, then, in the nature of things, our education will take a shape altogether pleasing. Either people of different faiths, having lived together in friendship, have produced a beautiful blend of cultures, which we shall strive to perpetuate and to increasingly strengthen the shape, or we shall cast about for the day, when there was only one religion represented in Hindustan, and retrace our steps to that exclusive culture. It is just possible that we might not be able to find any such historical date and, if we do and we retrace our steps, we shall throw our culture back to that ugly period, and deservedly earn the execration of the universe. By way of example, if we make the vain attempt to obliterate the Muslim period, then we shall have to forget that there was the mighty Jumma Masjid in Delhi, second to none in the world, or that there was a Muslim University in Aligarh, or that there was the Taj in Agra, one of the seven wonders of the world, or that there were the great forts of Delhi and of Agra, built during the Mogul period. We shall then have to rewrite our history with that end in view. Surely, today we have not the atmosphere, which will enable us to come to a right conclusion about the conflicting choices. Our two months old freedom is struggling to get itself shaped. We do not know what shape it will ultimately take. And until we know this definitely, it should be enough, if we make such changes as are possible, in the existing universities and breathe in our existing educational institutions the quickening spirit of freedom. The experience we will thus gain will be helpful, when the time is ripe for founding new universities.

"Last but not least remains Basic Education. It is an infant, not more than eight years old. Therefore, the actual experience does not take us beyond what may be termed the matriculation stage. Thus,

though it is limited in scope, the mind of those who are engaged in making the experiment, has grown far beyond that stage. It would be unwise for any educationist to put aside the recommendations of a body, which has behind it the solid experience of eight years. And it should be borne in mind that this Basic Education has grown out of the atmosphere surrounding us in the country, and is in response to it. It is, therefore, designed to cope with that atmosphere. This atmosphere pervades India's seven hundred thousand villages and its millions of inhabitants. Forget them, and you forget India. India is not to be found in her cities. India is in her innumerable villages. The cities rose in answer to the requirements of the foreign domination. They exist, as they were two months ago, for, though the foreign rule has disappeared, its influence has not and cannot quite so suddenly. Thus, I am writing these lines in New Delhi. If I know nothing of the villages of India, how can I draw, sitting here, a true picture of the villages? What applies to me, applies more forcibly to the ministers."

A correspondent wrote: "I believe that such a project will present great difficulties, if it comes into being before linguistic redistribution. I cannot understand why the Congress should take any time in accomplishing this linguistic redistribution." Gandhi replied:

"I entirely endorse the suggestion underlying the foregoing letter, namely, that what is proper to be done should not be delayed without just cause, and that what is improper should not be conceded under any circumstances whatsoever. There can be no compromise with evil and, since the linguistic redistribution is desirable from almost every point of view, all delay in carrying out the project should be avoided.

"But the reluctance to enforce the linguistic redistribution is perhaps justifiable in the present depressing atmosphere. The exclusive spirit is ever uppermost. Everyone thinks of himself and his family. No one thinks of the whole of India. The centripetal force is undoubtedly there, but it is not vocal, never boisterous, whereas the centrifugal is on the surface, and in its very nature makes the loudest noise, demanding the attention of all. It manifests itself most in matters communal. This has given rise to fear in the other fields. The history of the quarrel between Orissa and Andhra, Orissa and Bihar, and Orissa and Bengal is fresh in our minds. The whole of it has not died out even now. This is but an illustration of an almost

accomplished fact. The other provinces were never redistributed in law, although they were in 1920, when the Congress had a brand new constitution, enabling it to put up a life-and-death struggle with perhaps the greatest empire that has ever existed. How will Madras, though divided by the Congress, divide itself into four new provinces, and Bombay do likewise in law? Many other claimants have come to the fore. They are not recognized by the Congress, but they are not less vocal, or less insistent. The Congress does not command the prestige and the authority, it found itself in possession of in 1920. Despair has given place to hope. Now, when we have freedom, we seem not to know what to do with it. It is almost mistaken for suicidal anarchy. Even the zealous reformers would postpone the controversial issues to a more hopeful time, when, in the interest of the country, the virtue of 'give and take' would be freely recognized and all the sectional interests would be subordinate to the one interest of the good of India, which will include the good of all. Therefore, those who like me, want constructive suggestions to come into play at this very moment, have to work to bring about a healthy atmosphere, promoting concord in the place of discord, peace in the place of strife, progress in the place of retrogression, and life in the place of death. That happy day will be most manifest, when the communal strife has died out. In the meanwhile, will the southern linguistic groups settle their disputes and boundaries, will Bombay produce an agreed scheme of redistribution according to language, and will the new candidates withdraw their claims, at least for the time being? Then linguistic redistribution can come into being today, without the slightest difficulty or fuss.

"Let there be no undue strain upon the Congress, whose foundations have been shaken to their roots. The Congress is ill-equipped today, either for arbitrating between the rival claimants or imposing its will upon recalcitrants."

Hope For The Future

1947

On October 27, 1947, Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union and Indian troops were despatched to Srinagar to help defend the territory and to protect the lives and the property of the people from the onslaught of the raiders. The action followed an appeal by the ruler of Kashmir, who promised immediately to set up an interim government headed by Sheikh Abdullah.

Referring to the situation in Kashmir, Gandhi stated, that when the ruler in his distress wished to accede to the Union, the Governor-General could not reject the advance. The Indian Government sent troops by air to Kashmir, telling the maharaja that the accession was provisional upon an impartial plebiscite being taken of Kashmiris, irrespective of religion. The maharaja had wisely appointed Sheikh Abdullah as his prime minister. It pleased the speaker to read in the papers that the Sheikh Saheb had risen to the occasion and made a hearty response to the invitation. What was the situation? It was stated that a rebel army composed of the Afridis and the like, ably officered, was advancing towards Srinagar, burning and looting the villages along the route, destroying even the electric power-house, thus leaving Srinagar in darkness. It was difficult to believe that the entry could take place without some kind of encouragement from the Pakistan Government. He had not enough data to come to a judgement, as to the merits of the case. Nor was it necessary for his purpose. All he knew was, that it was right for the Union Government to rush troops, even a handful, to Srinagar. That must save the situation to the extent of giving confidence to the Kashmiris, especially to the Sheikh Saheb, who was affectionately called Sher-e-Kashmir, the Lion of Kashmir. The result was in the hands of God. Men could but do or die. The speaker would not shed a tear, if the little Union force was wiped out, like the Spartans, bravely defending Kashmir, nor would he mind the Sheikh Saheb and his Muslim,

Hindu and Sikh comrades, men and women, dying at their post in defence of Kashmir. That would be a glorious example to the rest of India. Such heroic defence would infect the whole of India, and we would forget that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were ever enemies. Then we would realize that not all Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs were fiends. There were some good men and women, in all religions and races. The universe existed on its good men and women. Indeed, he would not be surprised, if even the rebel army was itself converted to sanity. Let them remember the refrain of the *bhajan:* "We were all of and from one and the same God, no matter, by what name, we worshipped Him."

On November 1st, he invited the prayer audience to cast their mental eyes on Kashmir and picture to themselves the condition of the people there. When he listened to the sound which the aeroplanes above made in their journey to Kashmir, his heart went out to the Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdullah, and his people. He was a friend of all and made no distinctions between man and man. He represented the non-Muslims, as well as the Muslims. He remarked that those who were fleeing from Kashmir out of fear, should not do so. They all should learn to be brave and fearless, and they should be prepared to lay down their lives in defence of their homes. And this applied equally to all, whether old or young, or women or children. He would not mind, if the whole of the military and the people of Kashmir died at their post, in defence of fair Kashmir. How he wished that the Afridis and other freebooters were sensible enough to leave Kashmir alone.

On November 2, there was a much larger audience than usual and about ten objectors to the recitation from the Koran. There was among the objectors the old friend too. But the objectors were perfectly restrained and courteous. Gandhi was also told that there was a suppressed objection from a much larger number. Before proceeding with the usual prayer, he remarked that he was glad that the people were open enough to register their objection. He did not like to think that the people came not to share the worship of God but they came to see him or to hear him, because he was called a Mahatma, or because of his long service of the nation. The prayer was all-inclusive. God was known by many names. And, in the last analysis, the names were as many as human beings. It was rightly said that even animals, birds and stones adored God. They would

find in the *Bhajanavali* a hymn by a Muslim saint, which said that the chirp of the birds in the morning and evening signified that they adored their Maker. There was no sense in objecting to any part of the prayer, because it was selected from the Holy Koran or from any other scripture. Whatever might be the shortcomings of certain Muslims, the objection could not apply to the whole community, much less to the Prophet or any other, or his message. He had gone through the whole of the Koran. He had gained by it, not lost by it. He felt that he was a better Hindu for the reading of the world's scriptural books. He knew that there were many hostile critics of the Koran. A friend from Bombay who had many Muslim friends had put before him a conundrum. What was the teaching of the Prophet about the kafirs? Were not the Hindus kafirs, according to the Holy Koran? He had long come to the conclusion that they were not. He referred to his Muslim friends about the matter. They spoke from knowledge. They assured him that kafir, in the Holy Koran, meant a non-believer. They said that the Hindus were not, because they believed in one God. If they went by what the hostile critics said, they would condemn the Koran and the Prophet, as they would condemn Krishna, who was depicted as a dissolute being, having sixteen thousand *gopis*. He then silenced his critics by saying that his Krishna was immaculate. He would not bow his head before a rake. The God whom they worshipped with him every evening, was in everyone and was all-powerful. And, therefore, they could have no enemy and they could fear none, because God was in them and by them every moment. Such being the nature of the congregational worship, he would prefer to have no such worship, if they could not with their whole heart and without any reservation join the prayer. If they could, they would find that they daily gathered strength to enable them to dispel the darkness that surrounded them.

On asking the audience fearlessly to express their opinion, they lustily replied that they wanted the prayer and that, if there was an interruption, they would bear no anger or malice against the objectors. The prayer then went on in usual manner, Tagore's granddaughter Nandita singing the *bhajan* of the evening.

Referring to the Kashmir trouble, Gandhi stated that the Indian Union continued to send more troops and the other necessary help. The Government did not own many aeroplanes, but he was glad to hear that private companies had placed their planes at the disposal

of the Government. Time ran in favour of the ordered troops and ordered government and against the free booters.

He was, however, sorry to learn that the freebooters in Kashmir were being led by two ex-officers of the I.N.A., which had valiantly fought under the able leadership of the late Shri Subhas Bose. It was composed of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others. They retained their own religion, but there was no distinction of caste or creed. They were all knit together in bonds of friendship and brotherhood and they were proud of being Indians. He had met them—if it was they—in the Delhi Fort and outside, after their release. He could not understand why they led the freebooters and took part in burning and looting villages and murdering innocent men and women. They were harming the Afridis and the other tribesmen by encouraging them to do the forbidden things. If he was in their place, he would wean the tribesmen from their error. They could meet the Sheikh Saheb, if they thought he was harming Islam or India. He hoped that his appeal would reach these I.N.A. officers and the tribesmen, and that they would retrace their steps.

He could not escape the conclusion that the Pakistan Government was directly or indirectly encouraging the raid. The Prime Minister of the Frontier Province was reported to have openly encouraged the raid and had even appealed to the Islamic world for aid. Then the speaker had seen in the papers that Nehru's Government was accused of fraud, in that assistance was being sent to Kashmir and that accession was being plotted from some time. He was amazed that such reckless charges were made by a Pakistan minister against the Government of a sister dominion. He had brought in Kashmir in his remarks, because he had good news from friends, which he wanted to share with the audience. The news did not square with the Qaid-e-Azam's declaration that there was an enemy of Pakistan meaning the Union, he supposed. One Hindu friend from Karachi saw him and another from Lahore. Both informed him that things were better than a few days ago, and that they were getting still better. He was told too, that at least one Muslim family was seen by the friend to have given shelter to a Sikh friend and set apart one room for keeping the Sikh friend's Granth Saheb with due respect. He was informed that such instances of the Hindus and the Sikhs having sheltered Muslims and vice versa could be multiplied. He had, too, some Muslim friends coming to him, who deplored

with him that a vast and criminal exchange of populations was going on. These friends told him that the Muslim refugees in Pakistan suffered no less than the Sikhs and the Hindus in the Indian Union. No government could cope with such a large mass of human beings uprooted from their homes and thrown on its shoulders. It was like an overwhelming onrush of waters. Could not this mad rush be stopped? asked the friends. He had no doubt that it could be, if the suspicion and the flinging of charges—he thought baseless—was altogether and sincerely stopped. He asked the audience to pray with him that God would bring sanity to the unhappy land. He wished to congratulate the objectors on their wise restraint in allowing the prayer to proceed smoothly and without any interruption.

On November 3, his speech was read out at the meeting:

"If two quantities of poison mix together, who will decide which was the first on the field and, if such a decision could be arrived at, what end would it serve? We know it, however, that the virus has spread throughout the Western Pakistan area, and that it has not as yet been recognized as such by the powers that be. So far as the Indian Union is concerned, it has been confined to a small part of it. Would to God that the virus would remain under isolation and control! There would then be cause for every hope, that it would be expelled in due time and that soon from both the parts.

"In view of the fact that Dr. Rajendra Prasad has called a meeting of the Premiers or their representatives and others to help and advise him in the matter of food control, I feel that I should devote this evening to that very important question. Nothing that I have heard during these days has moved me from the stand that I took up from the very beginning that the control should be entirely removed at the earliest moment possible, certainly not later than six months hence. Not a day passes but letters and wires come to me, some from important persons, declaring emphatically that both the controls should be removed. I propose to omit the other, the cloth control, for the time being.

"Control gives rise to fraud, suppression of truth, intensification of the black market and to artificial scarcity. Above all, it unmans the people and deprives them of initiative, it undoes the teaching of self-help they have been learning for a generation. It makes them spoon-fed. This is a tragedy next only, if, indeed, not equal, to the fratricide on a large scale and the insane exchange of population,

resulting in unnecessary deaths, starvation, want of proper residence and clothing, more poignant for the coming inclement weather. The second is certainly more spectacular. We dare not forget the first, because it is not spectacular.

"This control on food is one of the vicious legacies of the second World War. Control then was probably inevitable, because a very large quantity of cereals and other foodstuff were exported outside. This unnatural export was bound to create a man-made scarcity and lead to rationing, in spite of its many drawbacks. Now, there need be no export, which we cannot avoid, if we wish to. We would help the starving parts of the world, if we don't expect outside help for India, in the way of food.

"I have seen during my lifetime, covering two generations, many godsend famines, but I have no recollection of an occasion, when rationing was even thought of.

"Today, thank God, the monsoons have not failed us. There is, therefore, no real scarcity of food. There are enough cereals and pulses and the oil-seeds in the villages of India. The artificial control of the prices, the growers do not, cannot understand. They, therefore, refuse willingly to part with their stock at a price much lower than they can command in the open market. This naked fact needs no demonstration. It does not require statistics or the desk-work civilians, buried in the red-tape files, to produce elaborate reports and essays to prove that there is scarcity. It is to be hoped, that no one will frighten us by trotting out before us the bogy of over-population.

"Our ministers are of the people, from the people. Let them not arrogate to themselves a greater knowledge than those experienced men, who do not happen to occupy the ministerial chairs, but who hold the view strongly that the sooner the control is removed, the better. A physician writes to say that the food control has made it impossible for those who depend upon the rationed food to procure eatable cereals and pulses and, therefore, he says, the people needlessly suffer from ailments caused by rotten stuff.

"In the place of controlled food, the Government can easily run the very stores for selling good grains, which they will buy in the open market. They will thus bring about automatic regulation of prices, and set free the hoarded cereals, pulses and oil seeds. Will they not trust the grain dealers and the growers? Democracy will break under the strain of apron-strings. It can exist only on trust.

If the people die, because they will not labour or they will defraud one another, it will be a welcome deliverance. The rest will then learn not to repeat the sin of being lazy, idle or cruelly selfish."

Before he commenced his prayers on the 4th, Gandhi said that though no one, except the courteous old friend who had registered his usual objection, had got up to object to the recitation from the Koran, he proposed to deal with a very pathetic letter of objection received from one Punjabi Hindu refugee who had suffered much. He did not know whether the objector was present at the meeting or not. But, whether he was present or not, the speaker would not ignore the letter, if only because it was written with deep pain. It was fairly well argued but was full of ignorance, which was born of anger. Anger was written in every line of it. Practically the whole of his time was devoted to listening to the tale of woes, whether recited by the Hindu refugees or the Sikh refugees, or the local Muslim sufferers. His spirit was equally touched and wounded and if he allowed himself to be moody, it was no expression of ahimsa. He would be weeping the whole day long, leaving no time either for obeisance, food or sleep. But from early youth, he had used himself in terms of ahimsa not to weep over the sorrows that came under his notice, but to harden his heart, in order to enable him to combat the sorrows. Had they not been told by the seers of old, that one who was full of ahimsa was bound to have a heart softer than a flower, and harder than flint? He had endeavoured to live up to the advice and so, when confronted with complaints like those in the letter in question, or the recital of their anger and their sorrow by his visitors, he hardened his heart, so as to battle with the problem of the day. The letter was written in the Urdu script. He had asked Brijkrishan to note down the points of the letter.

The first was the charge of breach of his word. Had he not said that, if there was even one objector at his prayer meetings, he would respect the objection and not lead the public prayer for the evening in question? This was a half-truth, more dangerous than full untruth. When he stopped the prayer meeting for the first time, he had announced that he suspended it for fear that the overwhelming majority of the audience might resent the objection, even to the point of molesting the objector. This was several months ago. Since then, the audience had learnt the art of self-restraint, and when he could get the assurance from the audience that they would harbour

neither resentment nor anger in their hearts, he consented again to conduct the public prayer. The result was happy, as he knew. The objectors were strictly courteous in their behaviour and beyond registering their objection, they did nothing to interfere with the public prayer. He hoped, therefore, that the writer of the letter would see that there was not only no breach, but that the result, so far, had been quite happy. He assured the audience that, so far as he knew himself, he had not been guilty of any such breach, throughout his long life of public service.

The writer of the letter then taxed him for reciting some verses from the Holy Koran, when he did not do so with reference to the Japji or the Bible. Here, too, the writer betrayed ignorance of the description he had given, as to how the whole of the prayer verses had been adopted. He had already pointed out that very often the *bhajans* were taken from the Bible, as well as the Granth Saheb.

And the third complaint of the writer was that there were known Congress leaders who had left the West Punjab or some other part of Western Pakistan, and did not live like the refugees, sharing their trials and difficulties, but were occupying buildings, more palatial than those they had occupied in Pakistan. They lived a life of utter isolation from the refugees, who were often without shelter, without warm clothes or even change of clothes, and without adequate food. If the complaint was true, it betrayed a disgraceful state of things. He had not hesitated at the prayer meetings to condemn in general terms the richer refugees for isolating themselves from the poorer ones, instead of sharing the latter's tribulation.

The complainant then in a sarcastic language twitted the speaker for not going to Pakistan, as he had intended. Why, he was asked, he preferred to help his Muslim friends, instead of going to Pakistan to the help of the Hindu and the Sikh sufferers? Little did the complainant know that he could not neglect his duty in Delhi and with any hope go to Pakistan to alleviate the sufferings of the Hindu and the Sikh brethren. He, however, confessed that he was a friend of the Muslims and the others, because he was an equal friend of the Hindus and the Sikhs. He did not believe in any exclusive service. If he served one, the spirit actuating him to render that service was that he served the one individual as part not only of India, or of one religion, but the whole of humanity. It was for the Hindus and the Sikhs of Delhi, refugees and others, to prove by their friendliness

towards the Muslims of Delhi that it was superfluous for him to be in Delhi. They would then find him rushing to Pakistan with full confidence that his visit would not be fruitless.

The last complaint of the writer was why, when the slaughter of pigs was prohibited in Pakistan, the cow slaughter could not be prohibited in the Indian Union. He replied that he had no knowledge of legal prohibition of the slaughter of pigs in Pakistan. If the information given by the complainant was true, he was sorry. He knew that use of pork for food was prohibited in Islamic law. But even so, he could not justify the prohibition of the use of pork by those other than the Muslims.

Had not Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah said that Pakistan was not a theocratic state and that it was purely a secular state? That the claim could not always be justified in action, was unfortunately too true. Was the Indian Union to be a theocratic state and were the tenets of Hinduism to be imposed on the non-Hindus ? He hoped not. The Union would then cease to be a land of hope and promise, a land to which all the Asiatic and African races looked, indeed, the whole world. The world expected not littleness and fanaticism from India, whether as the Union or Pakistan. It expected greatness and goodness, from which the whole world could derive a lesson and light in its prevailing darkness.

He yielded to none in his devoted worship of the cow, but that devotion could not be imposed by law. It would only come by cultivation of friendship with all non-Hindus, including the Muslims and by correct conduct. The Gujaratis and the Marwaris were supposed to be the foremost in their wish for the protection of the cow, but they had so far forgotten the dictates of Hinduism, that they would gladly impose restrictions on others, whilst they were grossly ill-treating the cow and her progeny. Why were the cattle of India the most neglected? And why had they, as was contended, become a burden on the land by reason of the poorest yield of milk in the world? As beasts of burden, why were they grossly ill-treated?

The various pinjrapoles were not ideal institutions to be proud of. Much money was invested in them, but a scientific and intelligent treatment of cattle was hardly to be found in them. These pinjrapoles would not bring about the regeneration of the cattle of India. They could only do so by strict regard to the humane treatment of cattle. He claimed that without the assistance of law, but because

of his being able to cultivate friendship with the Muslims of India, he had been instrumental in saving more cows from the butcher's knife, than any other individual.

On the 5th, Gandhi dealt with several questions that had come to him through the post. A Muslim friend had complained that in his part of the Union, the vegetarian Hindus insisted upon the Muslims, living in their midst, abstaining even from fish and mutton. The speaker had no patience with such intolerance and narrow-mindedness. Vegetarians in India, from religious conviction, were said to be in a minority. The vast majority of the Hindus throughout India, whenever they got an opportunity, did not hesitate to eat fish, fowl, or mutton. What right had the vegetarians to impose their cult on the Muslims? They would not dare to impose it on the Hindu non-vegetarians. The whole thing appeared to be ridiculous. The correct way for the people to spread vegetarianism was to reason out its beauties, which should be exhibited in their lives. There was no other royal road to bringing round others to one's view.

A Hindu critic stated that the speaker and others like him were never tired of preaching to the Muslims that, in spite of hardships entailed by their obstinacy, they should not leave their homes, even though they might be able to do so in safety. Whereas, if they stuck to their own pockets, they would not be able to stir out to earn their livelihood, or the manufactures of their honest labour might be boycotted by a vast majority of the Hindus. It was too much to expect the remnant of the poor Muslims, who had seen others slaughtered before their eyes and yet others going away to Pakistan, to remain in their homes, in spite of the disabilities. The speaker admitted that there was much truth in the criticism, but he had no other advice to offer them. He thought, that leaving their hearth and home was likely to result in greater distress. He, therefore, sincerely believed that, if the remnant honestly and heroically remained in their own homes, in spite of the sufferings, they were bound to melt the hard hearts of Hindu neighbours. Then, there would be certain deliverance for others in both the parts of India. For, unexampled bravery, born of non-violence, coupled with strict honesty shown by a fair number of Muslims, was sure to infect the whole of India.

Another letter rebuked him for having dared to advise Churchill, Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese, when they were likely to lose all, that they should adopt his technique of non-violence. The writer of

the letter then went on to say that if the speaker could give that advice when it was safe for him to do so, why did he abandon his non-violence, when his own friends in the Congress Government had forsaken it and even had sent armed assistance to Kashmir? The letter concluded by inviting the speaker to point out definitely how the raiders were to be opposed non-violently by the Kashmiris. He replied that he was sorry for the ignorance betrayed by the writer. The audience would remember that he had repeatedly said that he had no influence in the matter over his friends in the Union Cabinet. He held on to his views on non-violence, as firmly as ever, but he could not impose his views on his best friends, as they were, in the cabinet. He could not expect them to act against their convictions and everybody should be satisfied with his confession that he had lost his original hold upon his friends. The question posed by the writer was quite apposite. His answer was quite simple.

His ahimsa forbade him from denying credit, where it was due, even though the creditor was a believer in violence. Thus, though he did not accept Subhas Babu's belief in violence and his consequent action, he had not refrained from giving unstinted praise to his patriotism, resourcefulness and bravery. Similarly, though he did not approve of the use of arms by the Union Government for aiding the Kashmiris, and though he could not approve of Sheikh Abdullah's resort to arms, he could not possibly withhold admiration for either, for their resourceful and praiseworthy conduct, especially, if both the relieving troops and the Kashmiri defenders died heroically to a man. He knew that if they could do so, then they would perhaps change the face of India. But if the defence was purely non-violent in intention and action, he would not use the word "perhaps", for he would be sure of change in the face of India, even to the extent of converting to the defenders' view the Union Cabinet, if not even the Pakistan Cabinet.

The non-violent technique, he would suggest, would be no armed assistance to the defenders. The non-violent assistance could be sent from the Union without stint. But the defenders, whether they got such assistance or not, would defy the might of the raiders, or even a disciplined army in overwhelming numbers. And the defenders dying at their post of duty, without malice and without anger in their hearts against the assailants, and without the use of any arms, including even their fists, would mean an exhibition of heroism, as

yet, unknown to history. Kashmir would then become a holy land shedding its fragrance not only throughout India, but throughout the world. Having described non-violent action, he had to confess his own impotence, in that his word lacked the strength, which the perfect mastery over self, as described in the concluding lines of the second chapter of the Gita, gave. He lacked the *tapascharya* requisite for the purpose. He could only pray and invite the audience to pray with him to God that if it pleased Him, He might arm him with the qualifications he had just described.

On November 6, Gandhi said that he had the pleasure of meeting the ministers from the various provinces, or their representatives, who had come to Delhi to assist Dr. Rajendra Prasad in coming to a decision upon the recommendations of the committee of the non-officials, which the Food Minister had called into being and which had presented its report to him. When, therefore, he heard about the meeting, he asked Dr. Rajendra Prasad to give him an opportunity of addressing them, in the hope of being able to clear their doubts, if they had any. For, he felt quite sure of the stand he had taken up. Dr. Rajendra Prasad readily accepted his proposal and he was glad to meet the old friends. He had been saying that, so far as his opinion on the communal trouble was concerned, he had become a back number, but he was glad to be able to say that such was not the case with reference to his stand on the food question. He had held the view that there should be no food control nor cloth control, as long ago as when Mr. Casey, the Governor of Bengal, and he had the pleasure of having several interviews. At that time, he did not know, whether he had any backing or not. But during the recent controversy, he was agreeably surprised to discover that he had a very extensive backing from members of the public, unknown and well known. Among the voluminous correspondence he had on the subject, he could not recall a single writer who dissented from him. He knew nothing about the view held by the magnates like Ghanashyamdas Birla and Lala Sri Ram, nor did he know that he was to have any support from the socialist circles, except when Dr. Lohia met him and expressed his whole-hearted approval of the ground he had adopted. The speaker had no hesitation in suggesting that, in the circumstances that faced the country now on the food question, Dr. Rajendra Prasad should be guided by one member or more from his committee, rather than by the permanent staff.

He then referred to the control on cloth. Though in this matter he personally was, if possible, on surer ground, than in the matter of the removal of food control, nevertheless he was afraid that about cloth control, he had not the backing that he had about food control. His submission was incredibly simple. The Congress readily had supported the opinion which he had held about khadi as an entire substitute for any mill cloth, foreign or indigenous. India had forty crores of inhabitants. If the Pakistan area was deducted from India, India would still have more than thirty crores. They had as much cotton growing in the country, as they needed. There were enough spinners to turn their cotton into weavable yarn and they had more than the required number of weavers in the country for weaving the handspun yarn. Without any outlay of very large capital, they could manufacture in the country all the wheels, the handlooms and other accessories, without difficulty. All that was needed, therefore, was robust faith in themselves and the determination to use nothing but khadi. They all knew that it was possible to have as fine khadi as could be desired and to produce patterns superior even to those manufactured by the mills. And now that India was free from the foreign yoke, there could be no hostility, such as khadi had to face from the representatives of the foreign rulers. It was, therefore, a most surprising thing for him that now that they had come to their own, nobody talked of khadi, and nobody seemed to have his faith in the possibility of khadi, and that they could think of nothing but mill cloth for clothing India. He had not the slightest doubt that the khadi economics was the only sound economics for India.

On November 7, Gandhi having gone to see the Muslim sufferers at Tehar and having been obliged to give more time than was expected, he went directly to the prayer meeting on his return. After the prayer, he referred to his visit and exclaimed with sorrow that the Muslims in and near Tehar were obliged to go through needless suffering. Several of them were landowners, but their land they could not till for fear of molestation. They had sold their cattle and ploughs and some other movables too. They were guarded by the military. The Muslim sufferers, who had gathered round him and had swelled to over two thousand, said through their spokesman that they were anxious to go to Pakistan, as life had become impossible and many of their dear friends and relatives had already gone there. It would be a mercy, therefore, if they were sent away to Lahore, as

early as possible. But that evening he did not intend to take up the time with a full description of the meeting at Tehar. He had told the gathering at Tehar that he had no power, but he would gladly carry their message to the Prime Minister and his deputy, who was also the Home Minister.

On November 9, his message was read out at the meeting:

"Diwali will be on us in a few days. A sister who is herself a refugee writes: 'The question, whether we should or should not celebrate Diwali as a festival, agitates most of us. I wish to put before you our thoughts on the question, no matter how lisping my Hindi words may be. I am a refugee from Gujranwala. I have lost my all in that place. Nevertheless, our hearts are full of the joy that, after all, we have our independence. This will be the first Diwali in independent India. Therefore, it behoves us to forget all our sorrows and wish to have illuminations throughout India. I know that your heart is sore over our sufferings and you would have all India to abstain from the Diwali rejoicings. We are thankful for your sympathy. Notwithstanding the fact that your heart is full of sorrow, I would like you to tell all the refugees and the rest of India that they should rejoice during the Diwali festival and ask the monied men to help those who are without means. May God Almighty give us the wisdom to rejoice over all the festivities that might come to us after independence.'

"Whilst I admire this sister and the others like her, I cannot help saying that she and those who think like her are wrong. It is well known that a family which is overtaken by sorrow abstains from participation in festivities, according to capacity. It is an illustration of the doctrine of oneness, on a very limited scale. Break through the crust of limitation, and India becomes one family. If all the limitations vanish, the whole world becomes one family, which it really is. Not to cross these bars is to become callous to all fine feelings, which make a man. We must not be self-centered or, being falsely sentimental, ignore facts. My advice to abstain from the rejoicings is broad-based on many solid considerations. The refugee problem is there, affecting lakhs of Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs. There is as well want, albeit man-made, of food and of clothing. The deeper cause is dishonesty of the many who can mould the public opinion, obstinate refusal of the sufferers to learn from their sufferings, and extensive inhumanity of man to man. I can see in this misery no

cause for joy. A resolute and wise refusal to take part in festivities will be an incentive to introspection and self-purification. Let us not do anything which will throw away a blessing, which has been won after hard toil and tribulation."

At the request of the Dewan of Junagadh, with the full approval of the ruler and the executive council and the people of the state, the Indian Government took over the administration of the state on November 9. It was made clear that this step had been taken only to avoid the serious situation that was developing in the Junagadh state, and at the express desire of the ruler, as well as of the dewan, to help avoid strife and bloodshed. It was pointed out that the step was purely provisional arrangement, pending the settlement of the issues involved either by negotiations or by plebiscite. The Pakistan Government had been kept fully informed of the developments.

Referring to the turn of events in Junagadh state, Gandhi, in his prayer speech on November 10, said that they had seen in the papers all about Junagadh. From the two telegrams received by him from Rajkot, he was satisfied that the newspaper report was fairly accurate. The Prime Minister, Bhutto Saheb, was in Karachi; so was the Nawab Saheb. The Deputy Prime Minister, Major Harvey Jones, was in Junagadh. They all were a party to Junagadh, acceding to the Union. The audience had the right to infer that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah was a party to this transaction. If he was, they were justified in inferring that the Kashmir and Hyderabad troubles would also be over. And if he could go further, he would say, things would take a happy turn and that the two dominions would become friends, and do everything in co-operation. He was thinking of the Qaid-e-Azam not as a Governor-General. As a Governor-General, he had no legal right to interfere with the affairs of Pakistan. As such, he occupied the same position as Lord Mountbatten, who was merely a constitutional Governor-General. He could go to the wedding of one who was more than a son to him and who was to be married to the heir-presumptive to the British Throne, only with the permission of his cabinet, and he was to return on the 24th of this month. The speaker, therefore, thought of Jinnah Saheb as the maker of the present-day Muslim League, and without whose knowledge and permission nothing regarding Pakistan could be done. Therefore, it was that he thought that, if Jinnah Saheb was behind the Junagadh accession, it was a happy augury.

What, however, he wanted to tell the prayer audience was about his visit to Panipat. Maulana Azad was with him. The Rajkumari was also to accompany him, but she was at the Government House, and he could not afford to wait beyond 10.30 a.m. by his watch. He was glad that he went to Panipat. He saw the Muslim patients in the hospital. Some of them had suffered ghastly wounds, but they were receiving all the attention possible, because the Rajkumari had sent four doctors, nurses and medical accessories. They then met the leader of the Muslims, the local Hindus, and the representatives of the refugees who were reported to be over 20,000. They were told that more were coming in daily to the dismay of the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police, both of whom, he was glad to report to the audience, were highly talked of by the Hindus, as well as the Muslims, not to mention the refugees. They were also able to meet the refugees, who were assembled near the municipal house. He was glad to find that, in spite of the terrible hardships that the refugees had to go through in Pakistan and also in Panipat—where there was no settled life—some of them had to live on the station platform and many absolutely in the open without adequate covering—he did not see any irritation in them and they were very glad that he had gone there. It seemed to him cruel that the refugees were dumped on in Panipat, without any previous notice to the deputy commissioner or anybody else. They came to know how many refugees were coming, only when the trains drew up at the Panipat station platform. This was most unfortunate. There were among the refugees, women and children, and also old men. He was told that there were women refugees who delivered on the station platforms.

All this happened in East Punjab, whose Prime Minister was Dr. Gopichand Bhargava. Dr. Gopichand was a valued associate of his. The speaker had known him for many years as an able organizer with great influence over the Punjabis. He said that he should not have thought that the task of East Punjab would be beyond him, but if Panipat was a sample of his workmanship, then it was a sad reflection upon his Government. Why were the refugees dumped anywhere without any notice? Why were there inadequate arrangements for their reception? And why should the officers not know before hand, who and how many were coming? Added to this, was the information he had received the day before, that there were three

lakhs of Muslims in the Gurgaon district, who were frightened into leaving their homes. They were now living in the open, alongside the public road with the expectation that they with their wives, their children and cattle were to undertake a march of three hundred miles in the severe winter weather of the Punjab. He did not believe the story. He thought that there was some mistake in the narrative given to him by his friends, and he still hoped that it was altogether wrong or exaggerated. But after what he had seen in Panipat, he was shaken in his disbelief. Anyway, he hoped that Dr. Gopichand and his cabinet would wake up betimes and not rest till all the refugees were well looked after. This could only be done by foresight and extreme vigilance.

Addressing the prayer gathering on November 11, Gandhi said that the previous day he had given them the news about the entry into the Junagadh state of the Provisional Government, in answer to the request of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of Junagadh state. He did so partly in astonishment and partly in joy, for he was not prepared for what appeared to be such a happy ending of the struggle of, and on behalf of, the people of Junagadh. He expressed also the fear that the joy would be premature, if the request made by the Junagadh authorities had not the imprimatur of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. They could not, therefore, but feel painfully surprised to know that the Pakistan authorities resented this occupation of Junagadh by the Provisional Government on behalf of its ryots, and demanded "the withdrawal of Indian troops from the state territory and relinquishment of the administration to the rightful government and stoppage of violence and invasion of the state by people from the Indian Union." They further contended that neither the ruler nor the dewan was entitled to negotiate any settlement, temporary or permanent, with the Dominion of India, and that the action of the India Government was "a clear violation of the Pakistan territory and a breach of international law".

According to the statements in the press the day before, he could see no breach of international law and no occupation by the Union Government. And so far as he could see, there was no unlawfulness about the whole of the movement of the Provisional Government on behalf of the people of Junagadh. The Union Government had certainly lent the use of its troops at the request of the princes of Kathiawad for the safety of Kathiawad, as a whole. Therefore, he

detected no unlawfulness about the whole transaction, nor could he see any justification for what appeared to him to be a *volte face* on the part of the Prime Minister of Junagadh. The way he looked at the whole thing was this, that the Nawab Saheb of Junagadh had truly no authority to accede to Pakistan without the consent of his people, of whom eighty-five per cent, he was told, were Hindus. The sacred hill of Girnar, with all its temples, was part of Junagadh on which the Hindus had spent a great deal of money and which was visited by thousands of pilgrims, from all over India. In independent India, the whole of it belonged to the people. Nothing of it belonged to the princes, as individuals. Their claim could only be sustained by their being trustees of the people and, therefore, producing the authority of the people for every transaction. That the princes had not realized their representative capacity, and that the ryots in the states, with honourable exceptions, had not yet realized their own capacity as the true owners, in the aggregate, of the states that they inhabited, derogated nothing from the doctrine he had enunciated. If, therefore, anybody had the legal right to accede to one or the other of the two dominions, it was the ryots belonging to a particular state, and if the Provisional Government did not at any stage represent the ryots of Junagadh, they became the usurpers to be driven out by both the dominions, and neither dominion could stand before the world to justify the accession by a prince in his own individual capacity. In that sense, he held that the accession by the Nawab Saheb of Junagadh was *ab initio* void, unless the ryots of Junagadh state could be proved to have set the seal upon the accession by the Nawab Saheb. To which dominion Junagadh would finally accede could only be decided, in case of dispute, by a properly conducted referendum, without the use of violence or show of it, accompanying the process. The attitude taken by the Pakistan Government and now also by the Prime Minister of Junagadh created a very curious situation. Who was to decide upon the right or the wrong of the case for Pakistan and the Union Government? Any appeal to the sword was not to be thought of. The only honourable way out was the ancient method of arbitration in the usual manner. There were enough men and women in India, who could shoulder the burden. If, however, the contending parties could not agree upon arbitration by Indians, he for one had no objection to any impartial person from any part of the world.

What he said about Junagadh state, equally applied to Kashmir and Hyderabad. Neither the Maharaja Saheb of Kashmir nor His Exalted Highness the Nizam had any authority to accede to either dominion, without the known consent of their people. This was, so far as he knew, made clear in the case of Kashmir. If the maharaja alone had wanted to accede, he, the speaker, could not defend such accession. This accession was provisionally agreed to by the Union Government, because both the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah, speaking for the people of Kashmir and Jammu, wanted it. Sheikh Abdullah came on the scene, because he claimed to represent the people of Kashmir and of Jammu, not merely the Muslims, but the whole of the people.

He had heard whispers that Kashmir could be divided into two parts, Jammu going to the Hindus and Kashmir to the Muslims. He could not think of such divided loyalties and splitting up Indian states into so many parts. He hoped, therefore, that wisdom would rule all India, and an ugly situation would be avoided without delay, if only for the sake of the lakhs of Indians who felt compelled to become helpless refugees.

Under "A Psychological Explanation", Gandhi editorially wrote in *Harijan*:

"The following is from Richard B. Gregg, an American friend who used to live in Santiniketan, as also with me in the Sabarmati ashram, years ago:

" 'Though because of my ignorance I am hesitant, yet I venture to send you an idea that seems to me not only to explain with perhaps less moral blame a part of the recent communal violence in India, but also to offer hope for the future.

" 'It seems to me probable that much of this violence is an expression, not so much of inter-communal suspicion and hatred, but rather, and more deeply and originally, of the long pent-up resentments of the masses, because of their oppression. The oppression was not only by the foreign political rule, but by the foreign modern social and economic and financial ways, which are contrary to the ancient habits of *dharma*, which were a very part of the nature of the masses. By foreign ways, I mean such things as the English landholding system, usurious money lending, heavy taxes, payable not in kind but in money, and other interferences with long established village life common to all Indian communities.

" 'Psychological studies have shown quite clearly that the severe frustrations suffered during the childhood of an individual, generate resentments, which are suppressed and remain suppressed, long after the person, who caused the original frustration, has died, but later, some occasion pulls a trigger, as it were, and releases the pent-up energy of the old resentment which then pours forth in violence upon some perfectly innocent person. This explains many crimes of violence, and, perhaps, some of the cruelties against the Jews in Europe. In India, the establishment of religious electorates created a channel into which it was easy for this energy to flow, but I believe the fearful energy of the explosion of wrath comes from the older cause I have mentioned. Such an idea, as this, would help explain why in all countries, all through history, a major change of political power results in more or less violence and disorder. Masses always suffer some oppression and, therefore, have resentments, which flare up upon a shift of control, or may be exploited by selfish leaders.

" 'If this surmise is true, it suggests that the suspicion and hatred of one community towards another is not so deep, as now appears. It also means that, as soon as the masses can be guided back into their ancient ways of life, with the chief emphasis on religion and on small organizations—village panchayats and communal family systems—the energy of the people will be turned from violence into creative channels. I would expect that khadi work among the refugees might help start such a diversion of energy into the sound channels. In such a development, I see hope.

" 'Forgive me, if this seems to be presumptuous. I write it only in the hope that an humble outsider, just because he is outside, may see a gleam of encouragement, that is not so easy to see in the dust and distraction of the struggle. Anyhow, I love you and India.'

"Though many psychologists have recommended a study of psychology, I am sorry, I have not been able, for want of time, to study the subject. Mr. Richard Gregg's letter does not mend matters for me. It does not fill me with any impelling enthusiasm for undertaking the study. Mr. Gregg gives an explanation, which mystifies the mind, instead of clearing it. 'Hope for the future' I have never lost and I never will, because it is embedded in my undying faith in non-violence. What has, however, clearly happened in my case is the discovery that, in all probability, there is some vital defect in my technique of the working of non-violence. There was no real

appreciation of non-violence in the thirty years' struggle against the British Raj. Therefore, the peace the masses maintained during the struggle of a generation with exemplary patience, had not come from within. The pent-up fury found an outlet when the British Raj was gone. It naturally vented itself in communal violence, which was never fully absent, and which was kept under suppression by the British bayonet. This explanation seems to me to be all-sufficing and convincing. In it, there is no room for failure of any hope. Failure of my technique of non-violence causes no loss of faith in ahimsa itself. On the contrary, that faith is, if possible, strengthened by the discovery of a possible flaw in the technique."

In a letter to Madame Privat, he wrote on November 29:

"I see that you have grasped the fundamental difference between passive resistance and non-violent resistance. Resistance, both the forms are, but you have to pay a very heavy price when the resistance is passive, in the sense of the weakness of the resister. Europe mistook the bold and brave resistance, full of wisdom, by Jesus of Nazareth for passive resistance, as if it was of the weak. As I read the New Testament for the first time, I detected no passivity and no weakness about Jesus, as depicted in the four gospels, and the meaning became clearer to me when I read Tolstoy's *Harmony of the Gospels* and his other kindred writings. Has not the West paid heavily in regarding Jesus as a passive resister? Christendom has been responsible for the wars, which put to shame even those described in the Old Testament and other records, historical or semi-historical. I know that I speak under correction, for I can but claim very superficial knowledge of history, modern or ancient.

"Coming to my personal experience, whilst we undoubtedly got through passive resistance our political freedom, over which lovers of peace, like you and your good husband, of the West, are so enthusiastic, we are daily paying the heavy price for the unconscious mistake we made, or better still, I made, in mistaking passive resistance for non-violent resistance. Had I not made the mistake, we would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of weak brother killing his weak brother, thoughtlessly and inhumanly.

"I am only hoping and praying, and I want all the friends here and in other parts of the world to hope and pray with me that this blood bath will soon end, and out of that, perhaps, inevitable butchery, will rise a new and robust India—not warlike, basely imitating

the West in all its hideousness, but a new India, learning the best that the West has to give, and becoming the hope, not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of the aching world.

"I must confess that this is hoping against hope, for we are to-day swearing by the military and all that the naked physical force implies. Our statesmen have for more than two generations declaimed against the heavy expenditure on the armaments under the British regime, but now that freedom from political serfdom has come, our military expenditure has increased and it still threatens to increase, and of this we are proud! There is not a voice raised against it in our legislative chambers. In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others, that India shall survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however imperfect, in non-violence, for an unbroken period of thirty-two years, since 1915."

Steep Ascent

1947

ADDRESSING the refugees at Kurukshetra, in a broadcast speech from Delhi, on November 12, 1947, Gandhi said:

"I do not know if it is only you, or whether others too, are listening in to me today. Though I am speaking from the Broadcasting House, I am not interested in such talks. To suffer with the afflicted and try to relieve their suffering, has been my life's work. I hope, therefore, that you will accept this talk in that light.

"I was distressed, when I heard, that over two lakhs of refugees had arrived at Kurukshetra and more were pouring in. The moment the news came to me, I longed to be with you, but I could not get away at once from Delhi, because the Working Committee meetings were being held and my presence was required.

"Quite by accident, General Nathusingh, who has organized the Kurukshetra Camp, came to meet me two days ago and told me about your sufferings. The Central Government asked the military to take over the organization of your camp, not because they wanted to coerce you in any way, but simply because the military are used to doing such organization and know how to do so efficiently.

"Those who suffer, know their sufferings best of all. Yours is not an ordinary camp, where it is possible for everyone to know each other. Your camp is really a city, and your only bond with your co-refugees is your suffering.

"I was sorry to learn that there is not that co-operation with the authority or with your neighbours, that there ought to be, in order to make the camp a success. I can serve you best by drawing your attention to your shortcomings. That has been my life's motto, for therein lies true friendship, and my service is not only for you or India; it extends to the whole world, for I know no barriers of race or creed. If you can rid yourselves of your failings, you will benefit not only yourselves, but the whole of India.

"It hurts me to know, that many of you are without shelter. This is a real hardship, particularly in the cold weather, which is severe in the Punjab and increasing daily. Your Government is trying to do everything they can for you. The burden is the heaviest, of course, on your Prime Minister. The Health Department, which is served by the Rajkumari and Dr. Jivraj Mehta is also working very hard to lighten your sufferings. No other government could have done better, in this crisis. The calamity is immense and Government too have their limitations. But it is up to you to face your sufferings, with as much fortitude and patience, as you can summon to your aid and as cheerfully, as you can.

"Today is Diwali. But there can be no lighting of the *chirags* for you or for anyone. Our Diwali will be best celebrated by the service of you, and you will celebrate it by living in your camp as brothers, and looking upon everyone, as your own. If you will do that, you will come through victorious.

"General Nathusingh told me of all that still needed to be done in Kurukshetra. He told me, that no more refugees should be sent there. It seems, as if, there is no proper screening of the refugees and it is hard to understand why they come and why they are dumped in various places, without proper intimation to the local authority. In my post-prayer speech last evening, I criticized the East Punjab Government for this state of affairs. I have just had a letter from one of their ministers to say that the fault is not theirs, but the Central Government is responsible.

"Now that all Governments, whether Central or provincial, belong to the people, it does not befit one to throw the blame on the other. All must work together for the general good. I tell you this, in order that you may realize your own responsibility also.

"You must assist in the maintenance of discipline in the camp. You must take the sanitation of the place too in your own hands. I have known the Punjab well, since the martial law days. I know the qualities and the failings of the Punjabis. One of them, and that is not confined to the Punjab alone, is the utter lack of the knowledge of social hygiene and sanitation. Therefore, it is that I have often said, that we must all become Harijans. If we do, we shall grow in stature. I ask you, therefore, to help your doctors and your camp officials—everyone of you, men, women and even children, to keep Kurukshetra clean.

"The next thing I want to ask you to do, is to share your rations. Be content with what you get. Do not take or demand more than your share. Community kitchens are a thing which should be cultivated. In this way, too, you can serve each other.

"I must also draw your attention to the danger of the refugees getting accustomed to eat the bread of idleness. The refugees are apt to think that it is the Government's duty to do everything for them. Government's duty is certainly there, but that does not mean that your own ceases. You must live for others and not only for yourselves. Idleness is demoralizing for everyone, and it will certainly not help us successfully to get over this crisis.

"A sister from Goa had come to see me the other day and I was delighted to learn from her that many women in your camp were anxious to spin. It is good to have the desire to do creative work which helps. You must refuse to be a burden on the state. You must be, as sugar is to milk. You will become one with your surroundings and thus help to share with your Government the burden that has fallen on them. All the camps should really be self-supporting, but perhaps that may be too high an ideal to place before you today. All the same, I do ask you not to despise any work, but rejoice at doing anything that comes your way, in order to serve, and thus make Kurukshetra an ideal place.

"The response to my appeal for warm clothing and blankets and quilts has been very good. People have responded well to the Sardar's appeal too. Your own share of these is also there. But if you quarrel among yourselves and some take more than their due, then it will not go well with you. Your suffering is great even now, but wrong action will make it even greater.

"Finally, I am not one of those who believe that you, who have now left your lands and homes in Pakistan, have been uprooted from there for all time. Nor do I believe, that such will be the case with the thousands of Muslims, who have been obliged to leave India. I for one shall not rest content and will do all that lies in my power to see, that all are reinstated and are able to return with honour and safety from where they have today been driven out. And I shall continue, as long as I live, to work for this end. The dead cannot be brought back to life, but we can work for those who are alive. If we do not do so, then it will be an eternal blot on both India and Pakistan, and therein will lie ruin for both of us."

Addressing the prayer meeting, Gandhi explained the significance of Diwali. It was a great day in Hindu calendar year. They should understand, why it was celebrated by illuminations. In the deadly battle between Rama and Ravana, the former, representative of the forces of good, overcame the latter, who represented the forces of evil. This victory established Ram Raj.

Today, alas! there was no Ram Raj in India. Therefore, how could they celebrate Diwali? He alone could celebrate victory who had Rama in his heart, for it was God alone who could illumine their souls, and such illumination alone was worth while. Crowds went to see man-made illuminations, but the light they needed today, was the light of love in their hearts. Then alone, they would be worthy of receiving congratulations. Today, thousands were in the most dire suffering. Could everyone in the audience lay his hand on his heart and say that everyone of these sufferers, whether Hindu, or Muslim, or Sikh, was as his own brother or sister? That was the test for them. Rama and Ravana represented the eternal duel, going on between the forces of good and evil. The real illumination came from within.

Gandhi then went on to relate how Jawaharlal had just returned from seeing wounded Kashmir. Jawaharlalji had been unable to attend the Congress Working Committee meetings, either the day before, or that day in the afternoon. He had brought him some flowers from Baramula. These gifts of nature were always beautiful. But the beauty of that lovely country was that day marred by the shedding of blood and loot. He had gone to Jammu, too, where all was not well.

The Sardar had had to go to Junagadh. Both Jinnah Saheb and Bhutto Saheb were angry, because they felt that the Indian Government had practised a deception on them and were forcing Junagadh to accede to the Union.

In order to bring about peace and goodwill throughout the land, it was the duty of everyone to banish hatred and suspicion from his or her heart. No victory in Kashmir, or in Junagadh, would avail, if they did not feel the existence of God within them and forget all their petty internal differences. Diwali could never be properly celebrated, until they had brought back to India all those Muslims who had fled from here out of fear. Nor could Pakistan live, unless it did likewise for the Hindus and the Sikhs.

Regarding the Working Committee meetings, Gandhi stated that he would tell them the next day, what was possible for him to tell. He concluded by hoping that all would go well with them and with India, and that God would illumine their hearts, so that they might be enabled to serve not only each other and India, but through it the whole world.

On November 13 he said that the Working Committee members and the invitees were unanimously of the opinion that the Congress, which had stood from its very inception for over sixty years for perfect communal harmony, was not to go back upon that unbroken record of perfect harmony, persisted often in the face of heavy odds. They were quite clear that, even though the Congress might for a time find itself in a minority, they should cheerfully face that ordeal rather than succumb to the prevalent insanity.

Freedom, without equality for all citizens, irrespective of race or of religion, was not worth having for the Congress. In other words, the Congress and any Government representative of the Congress must remain a purely democratic, popular body, leaving every individual to follow that form of religion, which best appealed to him or her, without any interference from the state. There was so much in common between people living in the same state, under the same flag, owing undivided allegiance to it. There was so much in common between man and man, that it was a marvel that there could be any quarrel on the ground of religion. Any creed or dogma which coerced others into following one uniform practice, was a religion only in name, for a religion, worth the name, did not admit of any coercion. Anything that was done under coercion, had only a short lease of life. It was bound to die. It must be a matter of pride to them, whether they were four-anna Congress members or not, that they had in their midst an institution without a rival, which disdained to become a theocratic state and which always believed and lived up to the belief, that the state of their conception must be a secular, democratic state, having perfect harmony between the different units composing the state. When he thought of the plight of the Muslims in the Indian Union, how in many places ordinary life had become very difficult for them and how there was a continuing exodus of the Muslims from the Indian Union, he wondered whether the people who were responsible for creating such a state of things, could ever become a credit to the Congress. He, therefore, hoped

that the Hindus and the Sikhs would so behave, as to enable every Muslim, whether a boy or a girl, to feel that he or she was as safe and free, as the tallest Sikh or Hindu.

Addressing the prayer meeting on the 14th, Gandhi said that the Congress Working Committee gave full three hours to a discussion of the resolutions to be put before the A.-I.C.C. It turned upon the question, as to how best to bring about an atmosphere, whereby all the refugees, Hindus and Sikhs, could be returned with honour and in safety to their homes, in Western Pakistan. The Congress Working Committee contended that the wrong commenced in Pakistan, but they realized also that the question of commencement dwindled into insignificance, when the wrong was copied on a large enough scale by the Hindus and the Sikhs, who took terrible reprisals in the East Punjab and the adjacent parts of the Union. If the A.-I.C.C. could with confidence say that, so far as the Union was concerned, the days of madness were over and that sanity reigned from the one end of the Union to the other, the committee could say with perfect assurance that the Pakistan Dominion would feel obliged to invite the refugees to return to their homes with honour and in perfect safety. This condition would be brought about, if only the audience and the other Hindus and Sikhs could install Ramanam, God, in their hearts, instead of Ravana or Satan. For, when they had displaced Satan and shed the present madness, every Muslim child would roam about as freely, as a Hindu or a Sikh child. Then, he had no doubt, that the Muslim refugees, who had left their homes under pressure, would all gladly return to their homes and the way would then be cleared for the safe and honourable return of every Hindu and Sikh refugee.

Would that his word could find an echo now in the hearts of his audience and that the A.-I.C.C. would be able to come to a wise and just decision!

The following day, Gandhi felt that the prayer audience would naturally expect him to tell them something of what he had said at the A.-I.C.C. meeting in the afternoon, but he, however, did not feel like repeating himself. As a matter of fact, it was what he had been saying to them all these days. If he was called, in all sincerity, the Father of the Nation, it was true only in the sense, that he had had a great hand in making the Congress what it had become, after his return from South Africa in 1915. That meant that he influenced

the nation greatly. But, today, he could no longer claim such influence. This fact, however, did not, at least should not, worry him. All had but to do their duty, and leave the result in God's hands. Nothing happened without God's will. Theirs was only to strive. So he had gone to the A.-I.C.C. meeting as a matter of duty, to tell the A.-I.C.C. members what he believed to be the truth, if he got the permission to speak to the members, before they commenced the business of the meeting.

What he wanted to tell the prayer audience, however, was about the controls. He could no more than just touch upon the subject in the A.-I.C.C. meeting, as he had taken a long time over the other matters of moment.

He felt that it was criminal to have controls. The control system might have been good during war time. It might be good also for a military nation. It was harmful for India. He was sure that there was no scarcity of foodstuffs or of cloth in the land. Rains had not failed them. They had enough cotton in the land and enough hands to work at the spinning wheel and at the loom. Moreover, they had the mills. He felt, therefore, that the two controls were bad. There were other controls too, as for instance, on petroleum, sugar, etc. He could see no justification for the controls. They tended to make the people lazy and dependent. Laziness and dependence were any day bad for the nation. He had daily complaints about these controls. He hoped that the nation's representatives would come to a wise decision and advise the Government to remove these controls, which promoted corruption, hypocrisy and black-marketing.

On November 17, Gandhi's address on controls was read out at the prayer meeting:

"Must the voice of the people be drowned by the noise of the pundits, who claim to know all about the virtue of controls? Would that our ministers, who are drawn from the people and are of the people, listened to the voice of the people, rather than of the controllers of the red tape which, they all know, did them infinite harm when they were in the wilderness! The pundits then ruled with a vengeance. Must they do so, even now? Will not the people have any opportunity of committing mistakes and learning by them? Do the ministers not know, that they have the power to resume control, wherever necessary, if decontrol is found to have been harmful to the people, in any instance out of the samples, by no means exhaustive,

that I am giving below? The list before me confounds my simple mind. There may be virtue in some of them. All I contend is that the science, if it is one, of controls, requires a dispassionate examination and then education of the people in the secret of controls in general or specified controls."

The first session of the A.-I.C.C., after the attainment of India's freedom, which commenced on November 15, ended on the 17th. On the very first day in the presence of Gandhi, President Kripalani told the A.-I.C.C. that he was resigning his position. He had neither been consulted by the Government, nor had been taken into their full confidence. He said that the Government ignored the Congress party. Gandhi, Kripalani revealed, felt that, in these circumstances, the resignation was justified.

Nehru and Patel were the heads of the Government. Their popularity and hold on the Congress machine was unquestioned. They identified themselves with the party. Why then should they accept the Congress President as a curb on their power?

Gandhi attended the Working Committee meeting, which was to elect the new president. He was for Narendra Deva. Nehru supported Narendra Deva's candidature. Other members opposed it.

At the request of Patel and Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad agreed to accept the presidentship. When he approached Gandhi for advice, Gandhi said, "I don't like it." Dr. Rajendra Prasad wanted to withdraw his candidacy, but subsequently he changed his mind.

At the A.-I.C.C., Kripalani resigned from the presidentship and Rajendra Prasad was elected President of the Congress.

Gandhi, who addressed the members of the A.-I.C.C. in camera, said that the Congress was the servant of the whole country and all communities. No Muslim in the Indian Union should feel his life unsafe. All those Muslims who had left India under coercion, should be brought back. The Union had to do the right thing, irrespective of the policy Pakistan adopted. He assured them that, if they did their duty, Pakistan would find itself obliged to follow suit. He also dealt with communal organizations and their dangerous creed and practice. The proper answer to these organizations, he stated, was the creation of a powerful public opinion by the Congress, which would render them ineffective.

Under Gandhi's guidance, the A.-I.C.C. passed resolutions on the repatriation of the refugees, communal organizations, states and the

controls. The resolution on the fundamental policy of the Congress ran as follows:

"At this moment of crisis, it is necessary that the Congress should declare its faith and policy in clearest terms, and that the people, as well as the Government, should follow that policy unswervingly. Even though the Congress agreed to a division of the country, in the hope, which has thus far proved vain, that thereby the internal conflicts might cease, it has never accepted the theory that there are two or more nations in India. The Congress has firmly believed in the whole of India as one nation, bound together by indissoluble cultural and historical links, which had been further strengthened in the course of the national struggle for independence. It was on the basis of this faith that the Congress grew up as a national institution, open to all Indians, without difference of creed or religion. India is a land of many religions and many races, and she must remain so. Nevertheless, India has been and is a country with a fundamental unity and the aim of the Congress has always been to develop this great country as a whole, as a democratic and secular state, where all the citizens enjoy the full rights and are equally entitled to the protection of the state, irrespective of the religion to which they belong. The Constituent Assembly has accepted this as the basic principle of the constitution. This lays on every Indian citizen the obligation to honour it.

"The Congress wants to reassure the minorities in India, that it will continue to protect, to the best of its ability, their citizen rights against any aggression. The Central Government, as well as the provincial Governments must accordingly make every effort to create conditions, wherein all minorities and all citizens have security and opportunity for their progress. All citizens have also, on their part, not only to share in the benefits of freedom, but also to shoulder the burdens and responsibility which accompany it, and must above all be loyal to India.

"The All-India Congress Committee calls upon all Congressmen and the people of India to adhere strictly to these well established principles of the National Congress and not to allow themselves to be diverted into the wrong channels by passion or by prejudice, or by the tragic events that have happened. Real good and the progress of India have yet to be achieved, and this can only be done by adhering to the ideals and the policy of the Congress and discarding and

opposing all false doctrines, which have done so much mischief to India and her people."

Addressing the prayer gathering on the 18th, Gandhi referred to the resolutions passed by the A.-I.C.C. He said that they were most of them such as expected some duty to be performed by the public, as also something to be done by the Central Government and the provincial Governments.

Thus, the main resolution expected every non-Muslim citizen to be fair to every Muslim citizen, so as to enable the latter to feel perfectly secure in any part of India, as to his person and his property. The resolution equally demanded from the Governments, so far as it lay in their power, to afford such protection. And it also expected that the Governments and the public would so act, as to enable all the Muslim evacuees, who had left their homes under pressure, to return and take up their usual avocations. The real test was that the columns who were marching on foot towards Pakistan, would feel such a change in the atmosphere, as to make them turn towards their homes. He was very glad to be able to say that some persons of the column, that was moving from the Gurgaon district, were turning homeward. If the public acted correctly, he was quite sure that the whole column would follow suit.

Gandhi further said that he was informed that the case of the Panipat Muslims was somewhat of the style of the Gurgaon column. If railway conveyance was available, the Muslims might go to Pakistan under pressure. When he went to Panipat the other day, he was informed that no Hindu inhabitant of Panipat wanted the Muslims to leave their homes, if only because each was helpful to the other. The Muslims were accomplished artisans, the Hindus were traders, for the most part, depending upon their Muslim neighbours for the supply of wares to deal in. But the advent of a large number of refugees, disturbed the even tenor of their lives. He could not understand the change of attitude, which the occupation of Muslim houses by the refugees, after his visit to Panipat, signified, and the proposed exodus of the Muslims from that place. That was all contrary to the letter and spirit of the resolution he referred to. He almost felt like going to Panipat and living there and studying for himself the condition, as it was reported to have developed.

Addressing the prayer gathering on November 19th, Gandhi said that the previous evening he had referred to the main resolution of

the A.-I.C.C. regarding Hindu-Muslim relations. It was his misfortune to refer to an illustration of how it was being defeated in Delhi. Little did he know, that the very evening that he was expressing his misgivings, the truth would be illustrated in the heart of old Delhi. He was told last night, that there was a large crowd of the Hindus and the Sikhs collected in Chandni Chowk in front of a shop that belonged to a Muslim, but which was given to one refugee, on condition that the shop would have to be returned to the owner, when the latter came back. Happily, the owner turned up, having never wished to leave his business for ever. The officer-in-charge went to the occupant and asked him to vacate it, in favour of the owner. The occupant hesitated and then promised to vacate, on the officer returning in the evening for possession. The officer found that the occupant, instead of delivering possession, had evidently informed his friends who, it was reported, collected in a threatening mood, demonstrating against the shop being vacated. The few police in Chandni Chowk were unable to cope with the crowd. And so they summoned more assistance. It came, and the military or the police, as the case may be, fired in the air. The frightened crowd then dispersed, not however, without stabbing a passer-by. Happily, the wound was not fatal. The result of the rowdy demonstration was, however, curious. The shop in question was not vacated. Whether the authority was finally defied, or whether, at the time of speaking, the shop had been vacated, he did not know. He hoped, however, that authority to be authority, would never be defied with impunity under the state of the precious freedom India had attained. All he could say was that the whole thing was disgraceful. The crowd, he was told, must have numbered not less than 2,000.

Nor was this all. In another part of the city, an attempt was being made to force the Muslim occupants out of their places, so as to make room for the Hindu and the Sikh refugees. The technique was that the Sikhs brandished their swords and frightened the Muslims, threatening dire vengeance, if Muslims did not vacate their homes. He was also informed that the Sikhs were given to drinking with the results which could easily be surmised. The Sikhs danced with naked swords to the terror of the passers-by. And he was further told that, whereas, in Chandni Chowk, it was the custom for the Muslims not to sell *kababs* or other flesh foods in that vicinity, the Sikhs and also probably other refugees freely sold these forbidden foods in Chandni

Chowk, much to the annoyance of the Hindus in that locality. The nuisance had become so great, that men had found it very difficult to pass through the crowds in Chandni Chowk, for fear of receiving unwelcome attention. He wished to appeal to his refugee friends to desist from the practices he had described, for the sake of themselves and the country.

As to the *kirpans*, Gandhi said, whilst there was for a short time a ban on the carrying of them beyond a certain size, during the ban, he was approached by many Sikh friends to use his influence for the removal of the ban and the prescription of a particular size. They quoted the judgement of the Privy Council, which was given some years ago, ruling that the *kirpan* could be carried by any Sikh without any limitation as to its size. He had not read the judgement. He understood that the judges interpreted the word *kirpan* to mean a "sword" of any size. The then Punjab Government met the judgement of the Privy Council by declaring that it was open to anyone to possess a sword. And so, in the Punjab, any citizen could carry a sword of any size he liked.

He said that he had no sympathy either for Sikhs, or the Punjab Government. Some Sikh friends had come to him producing texts from the Granth Saheb, in favour of the speaker's view, that the *kirpan* was never meant to be a weapon of offence, or to be used anyhow. Only that Sikh who carried out the injunctions of the Granth Saheb, could use the *kirpan* on rare occasions of having to defend innocent women, children, old people and others against heavy odds. It was for that reason, that one Sikh was supposed to be equal to one and a quarter lakh opponents. Therefore, a Sikh who was given to drink and indulged in other vices, forfeited the right to carry the *kirpan*, as a religious symbol of purity and restraint, which is meant to be used only in the strict prescribed manner.

He was of the opinion that it was idle, even harmful, to invoke the aid of the past judgements of the Privy Council, in order to justify licence. We had just got out of what he had described as a state of bondage. It was wholly improper, in a state of liberty, to break up all healthy restraints, under which alone a society could grow. He would request the Sikh friends, therefore, not to sully the great Sikh religion by using the *kirpan* in favour of any questionable conduct or behaviour. Let them not unmake what was made by the arrays of martyrs, of whose bravery the whole humanity was proud.

On November 21, during the post-prayer discourse, Gandhi referred to a question that was sent to him by one of the members of the audience: What is a Hindu? What is the origin of the word "Hindu"? Is there any Hinduism?

These were pertinent questions for the time, he remarked. He was no historian, he laid claim to no learning. But he had read in some authentic book on Hinduism that the word "Hindu" did not occur in the Vedas, but when Alexander the Great invaded India, the inhabitants of the country to the east of the Sindhu were described as Hindus. The letter "S" had become "H" in Greek. The religion of these inhabitants became Hinduism and, as they knew it, it was a most tolerant religion. It gave shelter to the early Christians who had fled from persecution, also to the Jews known as the Beni-Israel and also to the Parsis. He was proud to belong to that Hinduism, which was all-inclusive and which stood for tolerance. The Aryan scholars swore by what they called the Vedic religion, and Hindustan was otherwise known as Aryavarta. He had no such aspiration. Hindustan of his conception, was all-sufficing for him. It certainly included the Vedas, but it included also much more. He could detect no inconsistency in declaring that he could, without in any way whatsoever impairing the dignity of Hinduism, pay equal homage to the best of Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. And such Hinduism will live, as long as the sun shines. Tulsidas summed it up in one *doha*:

"The root of religion is embedded in mercy, whereas egotism is rooted in love of the body. Tulsi says that 'mercy' should never be abandoned, even though the body perishes."

Gandhi said that he could not help mentioning the fact that, according to his information, about 137 mosques in Delhi were more or less damaged during the recent disturbances. Some of the mosques were converted into mandirs. One such was near Connaught Place, which nobody could miss. There was a Tricolour flag flying there. The mosque was converted into a mandir, with the installation of an idol. He considered all such desecration as a blot upon Hinduism and Sikhism. It was, in his opinion, a wholly ungodly act. That the Muslim in Pakistan had resorted to such desecration, could not be pleaded in extenuation of the blot he had mentioned. Any such act, in his opinion, constituted an act of destroying Hinduism, Sikhism or Islam, as the case may be.

At the risk of being longer than usual, he felt bound finally to refer to a case of persecution of the Roman Catholics near Gurgaon, which was brought to his notice lately. The village in question, where it took place, was known as Kanhai—about twenty-five miles from Delhi. One of his visitors was an Indian Roman Catholic chaplain and the other was a catechist, belonging to a village. They both had produced to the speaker a letter from the Roman Catholics in the village, narrating the story of the persecution, at the hands of the Hindus. The informants told him that the Roman Catholics there had been threatened, if they did not remove themselves from their village. He hoped that it was an idle threat and that these Christian brothers and sisters would be left to follow their own faith and avocation, without let or hindrance. Surely, they were not less entitled to their freedom, than they were under the British regime, now that there was freedom from the political bondage. That freedom could never be confined to the Hindus only in the Union and the Muslims only in Pakistan. He had in one of his addresses already warned the audience that when the mad fury against the Muslims had abated, it was likely to be vented on the others; but when he made the remark, he was not quite prepared for such an early verification of his forebodings. The fury against the Muslims, had not yet completely abated. So far as he knew, these Christians were utterly inoffensive. It was suggested that their offence consisted in being Christians, more so, because they ate beef and pork. As a matter of curiosity, he had asked the chaplain, whether there was any truth in the remark, and he was told that these Roman Catholics, of their own accord, had abjured beef and pork, not only now, but long ago. If this kind of unreasoning prejudice persisted, then the future for independent India was dismal. The chaplain himself had recently had his bicycle taken away from him, when he was at Rewari, and he had narrowly escaped death. Was this agony to end only with the extinction of all the non-Hindus and the non-Sikhs?

Gandhi exclaimed that he had no desire to live to witness such a dissolution of India and he would ask the audience to join him in the wish and prayer that good sense would return to the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Union.

Reverting to the ill-treatment of the Christians in a village near Gurgaon, in his prayer speech on November 22nd, he stated that he had received information, that somewhat similar treatment was meted

out to the Christians at Sonipat. If the facts were as stated, evidently the plague was extending and one would not know where the plague was to land India.

In a discussion with some friends, he was told that much improvement was not to be expected in the Indian Union, unless there was an abatement of the corresponding nuisance in Pakistan. What had appeared in the papers about Lahore, was cited as an instance. He himself never swore by newspaper reports and would warn readers of newspapers, not to be easily affected by stories reported therein. Not even the best of them were free from exaggeration and embellishment. But supposing, that what they read in the papers was true, even then a bad example was never a pattern to follow.

Imagine, a rectangular frame without a slate. The slightest rough handling of the frame would turn the right angles into acute and obtuse angles, and if the frame was again properly handled at one corner, the other three corners would be automatically turned into right angles. Similarly, if there was right conduct on the part of the Government and the people in the Indian Union, he had not the shadow of a doubt, that Pakistan would respond and then the whole of India would return to sanity. Let the reported ill-treatment of the Christians against whom, so far as he knew, there was no charge, be an indication that insanity must not be allowed to go any further and that it should be promptly and radically dealt with, if India was to give a good account of herself to the world.

Gandhi then referred to the refugee problem. There were among them doctors, lawyers, students, teachers, nurses, etc. If they tore themselves away from the poor fellow refugees, they would not have learnt the lesson from their common misfortune. He felt that all the refugees, professionals and non-professionals, rich and poor, should hold together and should establish model townships, as monied men of Lahore had built the model town of Lahore, which the Hindus and the Sikhs had now felt compelled to evacuate. These townships would remove the pressure from the crowded cities like Delhi, and they would promote the health and the well-being of the inmates. If over two lakhs of refugees in the big camp of Kurukshetra became a model for purity, within and without, if the people including the professionals and the rich men lived on equal terms with the poor refugees and led a life of contentment under the canvas, with well laid-out streets and in perfect voluntary co-operation, doing all the

services, beginning with sanitation, themselves, and occupied themselves usefully throughout the day, they would cease to be a burden on the exchequer, and their simplicity and co-operation would not only compel admiration from the city dwellers, but would also shame them into imitating them in all their good points. The prevailing bitterness and mutual jealousies would vanish in a moment. And the refugees, no matter how many they were, would cease to be a matter of worry to the Central Government, as also to the local Governments. Such an exemplary life, lived by tens of lakhs of refugees, would command the admiration of the distracted world.

In his discourse on the 23rd, he apologized to the radio men for his occasional breach of the rule that his speech should not exceed twenty minutes, not even fifteen, if possible. He said that he could not always observe the rule, for his main purpose was to reach the hearts of the audience that was physically before him. The radio came next. He did not know whether there was any arrangement, whereby it could record longer speeches. He was not in the habit of speaking without purpose, or for the sake of hearing his own voice.

Then he referred to the reported attack on the Harijans' liberty in Rohtak and elsewhere by the Jats. This was nothing new. Interference with the liberty of the Harijans was in vogue during the British regime too. What was, however, new, was that the persecution had now become more pronounced, instead of dying out, during their newly acquired freedom. Did not the freedom belong to every one of India, no matter to what state of society he belonged? Was the Harijan still the serf, that he was upto the other day? In his opinion, one wrong led to another. Our misbehaviour, irrespective of the doings in Pakistan, towards our Muslim brethren, led to our illtreatment of the Christians. Our conduct regarding the Harijans pointed in the same direction. If we had realized the full significance of the change that came upon India on the 15th of August last, the glow of freedom would have been felt by the meanest in the land. We would then have been spared the awful events, of which we had been helpless witnesses. It seemed, as if, everybody was working for his own advancement and nobody for India.

Gandhi's address dated November 24 was read out at the prayer gathering:

"You are good enough, when I enter the prayer ground, to keep ample room for me and my daughters to help me to pass through

you. I would urge you to observe the same orderliness when, after the prayer, I pass out. There is an unseemly rush to touch me, as I pass out. The crowds press in upon me. I know and I value your affection. I want it to take the shape not of effusiveness, but of some constructive service of the country, such as I have pointed out on many an occasion and in my numerous writings. The first and the foremost, today, is communal harmony. Formerly, discord was of a negative character. Today, it is of a most virulent type. The Hindus and the Sikhs on the one hand, and the Muslims on the other, have become enemies of each other, with the shameful result, which we have already seen.

"The attendants at the prayer should not only be free from any rancour against one another, but they should also actively assist in re-establishing the communal harmony, which was our pride during the Khilafat days. Have I not attended the huge friendly gatherings of those days? They gladdened my heart, when I witnessed them. Will those days never return?

"Take the latest tragedy that happened in the heart of the capital city yesterday. Some Hindu and Sikh refugees are reported to have gone out to an empty Muslim building and unlawfully attempted to occupy it. A scuffle ensued and some were injured, although none fatally. And this incident, bad as it was, was exaggerated, out of all proportion. The first report was that four Sikhs were murdered. The sequel was to be expected. Retribution followed, and several stabbings took place. A new technique seems to have been established now. The Sikhs with their drawn swords, which seem to have taken the place of little *kirpans*, with or without the Hindus, visit Muslim houses and demand evacuation. This is a monstrous state of things in this the capital city, if the report is true. If it is untrue, it may be dismissed. If it is true, it demands the urgent attention not only from the authorities, but the public as well. The former will be impotent, if the public is not behind them.

"I am not sure, what my duty is in this case. Things evidently are going from bad to worse. The full moon day of Kartik will be soon upon us. All kinds of rumours have been poured in upon me. I hope that the rumours are all untrue, as they proved to be for the Dussehra and Bakr Id.

"One lesson to be learnt from these rumours is, that we are living a hand-to-mouth life, which is not good for any state or nation.

Every servant of the nation has to consider seriously the part he has to play towards the abatement of this corroding nuisance.

"It is well to consider at this stage a long letter from Sardar Sant Singh of Lyallpur, former M.L.A. He has put up a forcible defence for the Sikhs. He has read into my prayer speech of last Wednesday a meaning, which the words do not bear and certainly never meant by me. Perhaps, the good sardar is aware of my intimate connection with the Sikhs, ever since my return from South Africa in 1915. There was a time, when my word was law to the Sikhs, as to the Hindus and the Muslims. Manners have changed with the times, but I know that I have not. Sardar Sant Singh, perhaps, does not view the present tendency among the Sikhs, as I, their avowed dispassionate friend, without any axe of my own to grind, can and do. I speak freely and frankly, because I am their true friend. I make bold to say that many a time the Sikh situation was saved because the Sikhs, in general, chose to follow my advice. I need, therefore, no reminder that I should be cautious about what I say about the Sikhs, or any other community. Let the sardar and every Sikh, who wishes well by them and is not carried away by the prevailing current, help in ridding the great and the brave community from madness, drunkenness and all the vices that flow from it. Let them sheathe the sword, which they have flourished and have used badly. Let them not be befooled by the Privy Council judgement, if it means that the *kirpan* is a sword of any length. A *kirpan* ceases to be sacred, when it goes into the hands of an unprincipled drunkard, or when it is used anyhow. A sacred thing has to be used on sacred and lawful occasions. A *kirpan* is undoubtedly a symbol of strength, which adorns its possessor, only if he exercises amazing restraint over himself and uses it against enormous odds against himself.

"The sardar will pardon me when I say, that I have fairly studied the history of the Sikhs and have drunk deep of the essence of the Granth Saheb. Tested by the tenets of that scripture, what is said to have been done by the Sikhs, is indefensible and suicidal. The Sikh bravery and integrity must not be frittered away on any account. It can be an asset to the whole of India. In my opinion, it is a menace which it should not be.

"Of course, it is nonsense to suggest that the Sikhs are the enemy number one of Islam. Have I not also been described as such? Is the honour to be divided between them and me? I have never desired

the honour. My whole life is a standing testimony against the charge. Can the same be said of the Sikhs? Let them learn the lessons from the Sikhs, who stand behind the Sher-e-Kashmir. Let them repent of the follies, committed in their name.

"I am also aware of the vicious suggestion that the Hindus will be all right if they will sacrifice the Sikhs, who would never be tolerated in Pakistan. I can never be a party to any such fratricidal bargains. There can be no rest for this unhappy land, unless every Hindu and Sikh returns with honour and in safety to West Punjab and every Muslim refugee to the Union, barring, of course, those who do not choose to do so, for reasons of their own. The sin of mass exchange of population must be washed out, if we are to live, as peaceful and helpful neighbours.

"I must not be asked to recount the evil deeds of Pakistan. For, the recounting will not help either the Hindu, or the Sikh sufferers. Pakistan will have to bear the burden of all its sins, which I know are terrible enough. It should be enough for everybody to know my opinion—in so far as it has any value—that the beginning was made by the Muslim League, long before the 15th of August. Nor am I able to say that they turned over a new leaf on the 15th of August last. But this statement of my opinion cannot help you. What is of moment is, that we of the Indian Union copied the sins and thus became fellow sinners. Odds became even. Shall we now awake from the trance, repent and change, or must we fall?"

In his prayer speech on the 25th, Gandhi said that some people had objected to being called refugees. They said that the whole of India, according to his own showing, was equally the home of every Indian. Therefore, every one of them had the right to settle in any part of the Indian Union. They had suffered heavily in Pakistan and, therefore, they had come to the Indian Union. They should be called sufferers. He had no objection to calling them sufferers, if that was a more pleasing term. Refugee was a familiar word in the English language, from whose spell many people were not yet disengaged. The Hindustani papers translated the word correctly as *sharanarthi*. 'Sufferers' was also an English word, which his visitors had used. He suggested *dukkhi* as the equivalent, which the visitors accepted. This evening, he wanted to talk to them about these sufferers.

He had met three sets of people, during the day. The first was a family from Lahore, who had lost everything, including seventeen

members of the family in Pakistan. They implored him to get them a house in Delhi. He told them that he was not the Government and even if he was, he would not help them. There were no vacant houses in Delhi. Sufferers like them, should go and live in the camps like others. They said, they were not beggars to live on charity. He replied that he would not have a single individual live on charity. Those in the camps should work for the food, shelter and clothing that they got there. They retorted that they had their children. But so had the other sufferers, he replied. The more capable class among them, should use their talents to organize the life in the camps and give the benefit of their experience and their knowledge to all their fellow sufferers. These friends argued that there were many Muslims still with houses. He felt ashamed and hurt to hear this argument. Many thousands had been forced to leave their homes. These sufferers had not been mellowed by their sufferings. But his appeal fell on deaf ears. He then suggested that, instead of expecting the much injured Muslims to give up their few homes, their argument would have force, if they asked him to leave his comfortable place in their favour. This seemed to silence them.

After that, came some Sikhs from Hazara. They did not seem to wear *kirpans*. They said that they were farmers and wanted facilities for farming. He asked them, why they did not go to the East Punjab. They replied that the East Punjab would not take anyone else, except those from the West Punjab. They held that there was not enough land in the East Punjab to take in those from the N.-W.F.P. also. There were 8,000 of these sufferers from Hazara. They all had been directed to go to the Central Government. In the speaker's opinion, the Government should settle them all on agricultural land, as early as possible. The Sikh friends told him that they did not wish to push out the Muslims from their homes. All they wanted was some land and ploughs, bullocks and seeds, by way of loan. Then they would produce their own food. They showed willingness to go to any part of the Union, where they could get agricultural land. The speaker thought that these sufferers were reasonable and that their reasonable wish should be gratified.

A member of the audience had asked, when they could expect to go back. He replied that they all could go at once, provided, they in the Union ceased to hound out the Muslims and were prepared to welcome back those who had felt compelled to migrate to Pakistan.

Then, he would be free to go to West Punjab and tell the Muslims there, that they should welcome the Hindus and the Sikhs, who had felt compelled to abandon their homes in Pakistan. Today, however, he heard the foolish talk that the three and a half crores of Muslims should be turned out of the Indian Union. It seemed to him to be intolerable. He did not wish to witness that catastrophe. He felt that he had become a futile burden on earth. But whether he was alive or dead, the sufferers would one day return to their homes.

The next day, Gandhi referred to a letter received by him from Bombay. The writer had enclosed a cutting from a Bombay newspaper and had not disclosed his name. The cutting pointed out that the All-India Radio was being used to broadcast his prayer speeches, which amounted to propaganda for the Congress. This was a fascist technique, with non-violence thrown in as a mask. The people were sick of listening to his speeches. His reply was that, although some people might be of that opinion, there were also others who wrote to him that his speeches put heart into them. The accusation was quite baseless. A Government which utilized the radio for singing its own praises was worthless. The good deeds of a Government alone was the right propaganda. As for himself, he only talked about the things which had an intimate connection with prayer and religion. If they were not interested in his talks, they need not listen to him. He was not interested in speaking for the radio. His one object was the service of humanity, and it was for that alone that he spoke to them. If the public stopped coming for prayers, he would not be making any post-prayer speeches.

He then referred to some of the letters, that had hurt him deeply. Several women had been abducted in Pakistan and some of them had been cruelly molested and dishonoured. Their upbringing was such that those rescued women felt ashamed, and the society also looked down upon them. To do so, was cruel. While it was true that no one could touch a woman, who possessed the purity and the *tejas* of Sita, it was very hard to find a Sita in this age. At any rate, every woman could not rise to those heights. A woman who was forcibly molested, had nothing to be ashamed of. She was in no way unchaste, or immoral. It was strange that, while the immoral men or women went unpunished and the lapses of some society men and women never came to light, people went out of their way to outcast the innocent victims of brutality. Such an outlook pained him. He could never

turn out or look down upon his daughter or his wife, if she had been subjected to such evil treatment and had escaped or been liberated. He had met such women, both Hindus and Muslims, and had told them that they had nothing to feel ashamed of.

Gandhi then went on to relate how the secretary of a provincial Congress committee, who was a farmer himself, had come to see him and told him that, while formerly all men and women in the villages used to lend a helping hand at harvesting time, today the farmers had to hire labour for that purpose. That increased the cost of food grains and removed the spirit of free and willing co-operation, which was an asset in itself. He knew of the good custom. He advised all, with all the emphasis at his command, to practise it.

The secretary also suggested that at least the Minister for Food, if not most, should be kisans. It was unfortunate that, today, none of the ministers were kisans. The Sardar was born in a farmer's family and, though he knew something about agriculture, he had become a barrister by profession. Their Prime Minister was a learned man, a great historian and a great writer, but he knew nothing about agriculture and farming. The other ministers were all well-to-do men, who had never worked on the land. Yet, more than eighty per cent of the India's population consisted of kisans. Only a kisan knew how to increase production and the fertility of the land. Only he could understand the whys and the wherefores of profiteering by the kisans and overcome the evil. In democracy, the kisan should be the ruler. The speaker would certainly like to push forward an honest and a capable kisan. Such a kisan, would not know English. The speaker would ask Jawaharlal to be the kisan's secretary and see the foreign ambassadors on his chief's behalf, and to take pride in such service. Such a kisan Prime Minister would not ask for a palace to live in. He would live in a mud hut, sleep under the sky, and work on the land during the day, whenever he was free. Then the whole picture would change immediately. In panchayat raj, the man who should count most in India, was naturally the kisan. How to advance him was the question.

On the 27th, he told the prayer audience that he had been to see the Governor-General and had met Liaquat Ali Saheb, who was staying in the Government House. There he learnt, that the Governor-General, the Prime Ministers of the two Dominions, Sardar Patel and the Finance Minister had conferred together and they had come to

some conclusions, which might bring about peace to the strife-torn country of theirs. Nothing was impossible for sincere men, in the way of bringing concord out of discord.

Then he had a visit from Sheikh Abdullah, who was affectionately called Sher-e-Kashmir. Though there were just a handful of Hindus and Sikhs in Kashmir, the Sheikh Saheb took great pains to carry them with him. He had been to Jammu also. What had happened there was most shameful for the Hindus and the Sikhs. But that did not make the Sheikh Saheb lose his balance. His visit to Jammu also bore good fruit. And if the harmony continued, as it promised to do, it would be a lesson in communal harmony for the whole of India.

Kashmir was a mountainous country. Life there was most trying in winter. Many routes passed through Pakistan. There was, however, a narrow strip which joined Kashmir to the East Punjab. But in the East Punjab, it was difficult for the Muslims to safely pass through, much less to live in, as it was difficult for the Hindus and the Sikhs in the West Punjab and in the N.-W.F.P. How could Kashmir have trade with the Indian Union, under these circumstances? If the insanity continued in the East Punjab, accession to the Union might prove nugatory. He hoped that wisdom would dawn upon the East Punjab. It was the duty of the Central Government to see that there was a safe land route between Kashmir and the Union, so that woollen cloth, other manufactures and fruits from Kashmir could come to the Union, as freely as before.

He sometimes glanced at *Dawn* and at *Pakistan Times*. These were influential Pakistan dailies. One could not dismiss with indifference what they said. These newspapers had reported that the Muslims in Kathiawad were being harassed. There was arson, loot, murders and abductions. He had received some telegrams also about this matter. Some of his Hindu friends had told him that arson and loot had certainly taken place in some places, but they were not aware of any murders and abductions. He had asked Liaquat Saheb, if the report of the Pakistan newspapers could be trusted. The Pakistan Premier had assured him that it could be trusted about the facts, although he could not vouch for the magnitude. The report hurt him deeply. He was born in Kathiawad. At the head of the temporary government in Junagadh was his nephew, Shri Shamaldas Gandhi. Sardar Patel, as well as Shri Shamaldas Gandhi, had assured in their speeches in Kathiawad that no Muslim could be hurt in Junagadh state or in

Kathiawad, provided the Muslims were faithful to the Union. He had been glad to hear that the Hindus and the Muslims of Junagadh seemed of their own free will to have decided to stay in the Union. If what was reported of the happenings in Kathiawad was true, then like their independence, what they had won in Junagadh was only to lose it. He hoped that those reports were highly exaggerated, if they were not entirely untrue. He would welcome an authoritative and a frank statement on the subject. If the poison spread throughout India, life would not be worth living in it.

One Bengali friend wrote a long letter on the exodus from East Pakistan. Its purport was that though workers like him understood and appreciated the speaker's argument and the distinction between death—courageous and cowardly—the common man detected in his statement a not too hidden advice, in favour of migration. "If death is to be the lot in any case, courage becomes of no count; for man lives but to escape death," he said.

"This argument seems to beg the question," remarked Gandhi. "Man does not live but to escape death. If he does so, he is advised not to do so. Man is advised to learn to love death, as well as life, if not more so. Indeed, a hard saying, harder to act up to, one may say. Every worthy act is difficult. Ascent is always difficult. Descent is easy and often slippery. Life becomes livable, only to the extent that death is treated as a friend, never as an enemy. To conquer life's temptations, summon death to your aid. In order to postpone death a coward surrenders his honour, his wife, his daughter and all. A courageous man prefers death to the surrender of self-respect. When the time comes, as it conceivably can, I would not leave my advice to be inferred, but it will be given in precise language. That, today, my advice might be followed only by one or none, does not detract from its value. A beginning is always made by a few, even one."

Secular State

1947

On November 28, 1947, Guru Nanak's birthday, Gandhi addressed the Sikhs:

"I fear that I might not be able to say to you all that I want to. I had also hoped that you having gone through the military machine would observe perfect silence. But the discipline has not reached the sisters and, therefore, they are not able to observe the laws of the public meetings. I had the same experience, when, some years ago, I was in Amritsar. You will admit that the fault lies with the men. As I entered the meeting place, I saw the remains of bananas and oranges thrown about anyhow. These have not only made the place dirty, but dangerous to walk. We should learn to keep the roads and footpaths as clean, as the floors in our houses. In the absence of proper receptacles, I have noticed disciplined people putting these in a piece of paper, and then temporarily in their pockets, until they are cast in their places. It is the duty of men, if they have learnt the rules of social conduct, to teach them to the womenfolk.

"Today, Bawa Bachittar Singh came to me in the morning and he insisted that I should attend the Guru Nanak's birthday celebration. He told me that probably over a lakh of men and women had assembled there, and that most of them would be the sufferers from Western Pakistan. I hesitated, because I felt that many Sikhs had been displeased with me. Bawa Bachittar Singh Saheb nevertheless insisted and said that I would say my say before the meeting. Then I yielded and felt that, even as a mother often gives bitter pills to her children, I would take the liberty of saying things, which might appear to be bitter. In reality and in effect, they are meant for your good. My mother often used to administer bitter drugs, but I could not feel elsewhere the comfort that her lap provided for me. Whatever I have said to you up to now, I do not regret. I have said those things, as your sincere friend and servant. I have with me Sardar

Datar Singh's daughter. You perhaps know him. He has lost his all in the West Punjab. He was the owner of extensive tracts of land and of several hundred fine cattle. He has lost many relatives and dear friends in Montgomery, but I am glad to be able to tell you that he has not shed a single tear over the misfortune, nor has he felt any bitterness towards the Muslims. I would like you all to follow his example. The Sikh friends have told me that one Sikh is considered equal to 1,25,000 men. Where is that bravery today? Have things come to such a pass, that a minority of Muslims cannot live in your midst with perfect safety?

"I am free to admit that the mischief commenced in Pakistan, but the Hindus and the Muslims of East Punjab and the neighbouring districts have not been behindhand in copying the mischief. The difference is that the Hindus have not the courage of the Sikhs, who know how to use the sword.

"You see today Sheikh Abdullah Saheb with me. I was disinclined to bring him with me, for I know that there is a great gulf between the Hindus and the Sikhs on the one side, and the Muslims on the other. But Sheikh Saheb, known as the Lion of Kashmir, although a pucca Muslim, has won the hearts of both, by making them forget that there is any difference between the three. He had not been embittered. Even though in Jammu, recently, the Muslims were killed by the Hindus and Sikhs, he went to Jammu and invited the evil-doers to forget the past and repent over the evil that they had done. The Hindus and the Sikhs of Jammu listened to him. Now the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs of Kashmir and Jammu are fighting together, to defend the beautiful valley of Kashmir. I am, therefore, glad that you are receiving the two of us with cordiality.

"Let this auspicious day, mark the beginning of a new chapter in your life and let the disgrace of driving out the Muslims from Delhi, cease from today. I found to my shame that, as our motor-car was passing through Chandni Chowk, which used to be filled with the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims, I did not notice a single Muslim passer-by. Surely, we have not come to such a pass, as to be afraid of the minority of the Muslims, scattered throughout the Indian Union. If there are any traitors in their midst, our Government is strong enough to deal with them. We must be ashamed of hurting children, women or old men. Every man must be considered innocent, before he is found guilty by a properly constituted court of law.

"I fervently hope, that such misdeeds will become now a thing of the past. The *kirpan* is a symbol of sanctity to be exhibited and to be used in defence of the helpless and the innocent. The tenth and the last guru of the Sikhs, undoubtedly, wielded the sword, but never, so far as I know, at the expense of the weak. He had imposed many restraints upon himself. He had many reputed Muslim disciples. So had the other gurus, beginning with Nanak Saheb. Your bravery will be testified, when all those who belong to different faiths, including Muslims, become your sincere friends.

"Intoxicating drinks, drugs, dancing, debauchery and the vices to which many of us become addicted, are not for the followers of the gurus and the Granth Saheb. With the Granth Saheb as my witness, I ask you to make the resolution that you will keep your hearts clean and you will find that all other communities will follow you."

In his prayer speech on the 29th, he said that many mosques had been damaged during the riots. Some mosques had been converted into temples. The idols should be removed without the intervention of the police or the military. These things could take place, only if there was real contrition. He knew that the idols could not be placed in the mosques by the Sikhs. What, however, he did say was that the reformation among the Sikhs would automatically affect the Hindus in the right direction. In the present instance, the Hindus and the Sikhs had worked hand in hand.

He said that a large number of Hindu and Sikh girls had been abducted in Pakistan. God alone knew, what awful things the girls were being subjected to. The Hindus as well as the Sikhs in the Indian Union had not behaved any better. He had learnt that the Muslim girls who were abducted, were subjected to unnamable ill-treatment by their lustful captors. He would like the East Punjab Government and their officers to deliver every one of such girls from this indecent captivity. Every abduction or capture should be regarded by both the Governments, as illegal and *ab initio* void. And it was the peremptory duty of both the Governments not to rest, until every such girl was freed from captivity and returned to the respective Governments. There could be no question of voluntary conversion or association on the part of the girl concerned.

The following day, Gandhi referred to several telegrams that he had received about Kathiawad. He had spoken to them of the reported happenings in Kathiawad, and he could not ignore what was written

in the Pakistan newspapers. Thousands of people read and believed those newspapers. Therefore, he had spoken to them without waiting for the verification of those reports. If those reports were incorrect, it was a matter of shame for the newspapers concerned. If they were true, then it was shameful for the people of Kathiawad. He had told them, what the Sardar had said. The Sardar had seen him also and he repeated his assurance that things were all right in Kathiawad. He had also received a telegram from Rajkot which said that some Hindus had lost their balance at one stage and they had damaged or had burnt a few Muslim houses, but the Congressmen aided by the state had immediately controlled the situation at the risk of their own lives. Shri Dhebarbhai, who was a well-known lawyer and a leader in Rajkot, had been mobbed. Some Congressmen had been injured. Thus, though the mob fury was turned against the Congressmen, the Muslims were saved. They were very sorry to learn of his distress and they wanted to reassure him that life was normal in Rajkot. They were making inquiries about the other places and they would let him know the result. It was the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha, who were supposed to have planned the attack, but they had failed. There was another telegram from the Muslims, offering thanks for the services rendered to them by the Congressmen. One telegram from some Muslims in Bombay complimented the speaker for having brought out the matter and added that many Muslims in Kathiawad were looted and were terrorized. Thank God, there was no mention of murders and abductions. It stated that many Muslims had left Kathiawad. If the assurances given were to be relied upon, the evacuees should return to their homes. He warned the people and the newspapers against making unverified or exaggerated statements. It would serve no useful purpose to deceive their friends. He had received too a reassuring telegram from the Maharaja of Bhavnagar. There was also another telegram from five Muslims of Rajkot, saying that thirteen shops were looted, resulting in a severe damage of about a lakh of rupees and saying that the state and the Congressmen had brought the situation under control. Against this was a telegram from Junagadh just received, as he was coming to the prayer. The telegram confirmed the alarming news that he had mentioned on Friday and it had asked for an impartial inquiry. The inquiry was not in his power to give. As the meeting knew, he was awaiting further telegrams from Kathiawad. He could say, however, that he would not be

satisfied, except with full assurances, which was, perhaps, better than an official inquiry.

He then fervently appealed to the Hindu Mahasabha and to the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh, both of which were Hindu organizations and had many well-educated men on their roles, to desist from what they were reported to be doing. Religion could never be saved by questionable methods. They should let the Government right the wrongs and punish the evil-doers.

Lastly, he referred to a communique published in the newspapers giving seven days' notice for the removal of idols from the mosques which had been converted into temples. If there was no compliance, the police were to remove the idols. Sardar Patel had said that the Government would repair the damage done to the mosques. In the speaker's opinion, it was the duty of the public to do so. An idol had no value, unless it was duly installed in a consecrated place by duly qualified devotees. Forcible possession of a mosque disgraced Hinduism and Sikhism. It was the duty of the Hindus to remove the idols from the mosques and to repair the damage. He had not heard of any mosque being turned into a gurudwara. The Sikhs worshipped the Guru Granth Saheb. It would be an insult to the Granth Saheb, if it was placed in a mosque.

A Muslim had brought to him a half-burnt copy of the Koran. He had wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, showed it to him with tearful eyes and he went away without speaking. The man who had thus tried to insult the Koran, had insulted his own religion. He made a fervent appeal to the Hindus and the Sikhs, to desist from bringing ruin to their country and religion.

On Monday, December 1, Gandhi's address was read out to the prayer gathering:

"Many friends upbraid me for often using 'if', in making many of my statements. I have made use of this little conjunction with much benefit to the cause that I am espousing for the time. The controversy now rages round the Kathiawad imbroglio. My friends feel hurt by the publicity gained by the reported atrocities, which they do hold to be groundless and which, to the small extent that they are true, the authorities and the Congressmen have battled against bravely and successfully. Surely, truth has gained by making a conditional use of the information given by the parties concerned. The Kathiawad authorities and the Congress will gain to the exact extent that they

have stood for the truth. But the friends hold that by the time the untruth is overtaken, mischief is done by the unscrupulous parties making unlawful use of my giving currency to a particular untruth by omitting the conjunction and by quoting me in support of it. I am not unaware of the danger. Each time it has been tried, it has failed miserably and the unscrupulous party has been discredited. My friends need not be perturbed by my speeches in which I make conditional use of compromising statements, provided, of course, always the parties attacked are above reproach.

"Let us now examine the converse case. Suppose, in the instance in point, I had ignored the charges made in the influential Pakistan newspapers, especially when they were on the whole backed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. My indifference would have resulted in the Muslim world giving credence to these reports, as if they were the gospel truth. Now the best Muslim mind is already sceptical about the truth of the reports.

"The lesson that I would have my friends of Kathiawad, and incidentally others, to draw from incidents, such as this, is that they should have their own house in perfect order, they should always welcome criticism, even when it is bitter, and they should profit by it by becoming more exact, if possible, and correcting their errors, whenever detected. We should never make the mistake of thinking, that we can never make any mistakes. The bitterest critic is bitter, because he has some grudge, fancied or real, against us. We shall set him right, if we are patient with him, and, whenever the occasion arises, show him his error or correct our own, when we are to be found in error. So doing, we shall not go wrong. Undoubtedly, the balance is to be preserved. Discrimination is ever necessary. Deliberately mischievous statements have to be ignored. I believe that by constant practice, I have somewhat learnt the art of discrimination.

"In the present disturbed atmosphere, when charges are hurled against one another, it would be folly to be in a fool's paradise and feel that we can never do wrong. That blissful state, it is no longer possible for us to claim. It will be creditable, if by strenuous effort we succeed in isolating the mischief, and then eradicating it. And we shall do so, only if we keep our eyes and our ears open for seeing and hearing our own shortcomings. Nature has so made us, that we do not see our backs, it is reserved for others to see them. Hence, it is wise to profit by what they see.

"I have not done with the long telegram that I have received from Junagadh last evening, as I was about to come to the prayer meeting. I was able only to glance at it. I have since read it carefully. The signatories repeat all the charges made in the reports, alluded to by me. If the charges are true, they damage the Kathiawadi Hindus; if they go baselessly beyond the admissions made and published by me, they have damaged the Pakistan cause. They invite me to go to Kathiawad and study things for myself. I presume that the senders know that I cannot do so. They ask for a commission. But surely, before they can do so, they have to make out a *prima facie* case. I must assume that their purpose is not to discredit the Hindus of Kathiawad or of Junagadh, as the case may be, but to elucidate the truth and to protect Muslim life, honour and property. They know, as well as anybody else, that the newspaper propaganda, especially when it is unscrupulous, will protect neither honour, nor life, nor property. All the three can be preserved and now, by the strictest adherence to truth and by going to the many Hindu friends, that the signatories know they have. They should know too that, though I am far away from Kathiawad, I am not idle. Deliberately, I opened the chapter myself and I am gathering all the information I can. I have met the Sardar, and he assures me that, so far as in him lies, he will prevent all communal strife, and he will see that all misconduct is severely dealt with. The workers in Kathiawad who have no communal prejudice are striving to reach the truth and seek redress of every wrong done to the Muslims, who are as dear to them as themselves. Will they help in the process?"

On December 2, Gandhi returned from Panipat, a little after half past five, and he arrived on the prayer ground, as the Ramdhun was being recited. He apologized for being late, and then gave a brief account of his visit. He had gone to Panipat, in order to see, whether he could persuade the Muslims not to leave Panipat for Pakistan. If they could have the courage to remain in their own homes, it would not only be good for them, but also for the whole of India, including Pakistan. He had met the Hindu and Sikh refugees too. They called themselves refugees and not sufferers. They were unhappy and they were bound to remain so, till they too went back to their homes. The same was true of a great many Muslims, who had been forced by the circumstances to leave the Union and go to Pakistan. The Muslims of Panipat mentioned, why they felt that they could not stay there.

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava and Sardar Swaran Singh were present in Panipat. The maulanas of Delhi also met him there. The Muslim friends of Panipat told him that though, on his last visit, they had assured him that they would not go, the situation had since then very much deteriorated. Neither their life, honour, nor property was safe. How then could they stay? The speaker told them that those whose refuge was God and who had nothing but love in their hearts for all mankind, would fear for nothing. They would suffer death or loss of property, but they would protect their honour. He had left Delhi at 10.30 a.m. and reached Panipat at 11.30 a.m. He was talking to the Muslims till 3 p.m. After that, he met the Hindu and the Sikh refugees. The audience was over 20,000. Dr. Gopichand addressed them and so did Sardar Swaran Singh. When the sardar stood up, the patience of the refugees gave way. The speaker did not think that they meant any disrespect to Swaran Singh. They merely wanted to give expression to their feeling, that they had had enough of speeches. It was time for them to put forward their grievances.

The refugees had a number of grievances. They complained that the food was bad and insufficient. The East Punjab Governor was, however, looking into the matter. Out of the clothes that were sent for the refugees, good blankets often disappeared. They were given the old and torn ones. One boy came and took off his clothes in front of the speaker and told him to restore his father, who had been killed. How could anyone do that? But he could understand the boy's grief and sympathized with him.

He said that he was relating all this to the audience, so that they might know how low they had sunk. They had their own Government, but they were not prepared to obey them. Jawaharlalji had said that he would rather be called the first servant of the nation, than the Prime Minister. Were all the Government officials really servants of the people? If so, there would be no scope for luxuries. They would all then be for ever thinking of the people and their needs. That would mean Ram Raj, or the Kingdom of God on earth, and that would be real and complete independence. The independence of today stifled him. It was unreal and unstable.

Referring to South Africa on the 3rd, Gandhi said that India had not carried her point at the U.N.O. Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit had told the Indians in South Africa that though they had lost, it was not a defeat, for India had a majority of the votes, though not the

two-third majority, which was required to get the motion through. She had asked the Indians in South Africa not to lose heart. She as a representative of the Union, could not go further. He went a step further and stated that there was no question of a defeat for those, who believed in the golden law of satyagraha. That weapon he had discovered in South Africa. Supposing, India had won at the U.N.O. and General Smuts had agreed to concede the demands of Indians in South Africa but the white population of South Africa refused to submit, what then could India do? Such things were happening in India today. The Hindus from Pakistan and the Muslims from the Indian Union were being driven out. Each Government had declared its impotence to protect the minorities. There was a large number of Hindus in Bannu. They could not go out of their houses, except at the risk of losing their lives. And if they remained indoors, starvation stared them in the face. What were they to do then? He would repeat the same advice to them, as he had given to the Muslims here. They should say clearly and openly that they would not leave their homes. They would live where they were born and brought up, but with honour.

South Africa was the country of the Negroes. The outsiders like the Boers had no greater rights than the Indians, who had gone there. But the Europeans suppressed the Negroes and deprived the Indian settlers of the elementary rights. It was quite proper to place India's case before the U.N.O. But if the U.N.O. would not or could not secure justice for the Indians of South Africa, should not they fight for their rights? In his opinion, they should, but not with the force of arms. The true and only weapon was satyagraha, or soul force. The soul was immortal, the body was perishable.

On December 4, Gandhi said that the Prime Minister of Burma had been to see him. He was full of humility. The speaker told him that though India was a great country geographically and her culture was ancient, today there was nothing for Burma to learn from India, although India had given birth to Guru Nanak, who taught love and tolerance for all. The Sikhs were asked to be friends with the Hindus, the Muslims and everybody. It was wrong to make any difference between the Sikhs and the Hindus. Master Tara Singh had compared the Hindus and the Sikhs to the nail and the nail-bed. No one, he said, could separate the two. He was glad to hear it. Who was Guru Nanak, if not a Hindu? The Guru Granth Saheb was full

of the teachings of the Vedas. Hinduism was like a mighty ocean, which received and absorbed all religious truths. It was a tragedy that India and the Hindus seemed to have forgotten their heritage. They seemed to be engaged in the fratricidal strife today. He did not want Burma to learn strife from India. They should forget the ugly present, which, he hoped, was temporary, and remember that India had won her freedom without bloodshed. He had admitted that it was not the non-violence of the brave that India had practised. But, whatever it was, it had enabled a mighty nation of forty crores to shake off the foreign yoke without bloodshed. It was the freedom of India that had brought freedom to Burma and to Ceylon. A nation that had won freedom without the force of arms, should be able to keep it too, without the force of arms. This he said, in spite of the fact that India had an army, a navy in the making, and an air force, and these were being developed still further. He was convinced that unless India developed her non-violent strength, India had gained nothing, either for herself or for the world. The militarization of India would mean her own destruction, as well as of the whole world. He then reminded the Burmese friends that they had got their Buddhism too from India. He had come in touch with the Burmese phoongyis. Let Burma take the best of Buddhism from India. In his opinion, the quality of the original Buddhism had suffered from migration. He wanted Burma and Ceylon to rise to their highest heights. And this they could do only by copying its best from India and omitting its obvious shortcomings.

In the course of his written post-prayer address of December 8, Gandhi said:

"Sugar control had gone and control on cereals, pulses and cloth will also go. The object of the removal is not to lower the prices at a bound, it is to return to normal life. Superimposed control is bad any day. And it is worse in this country, in that we are a nation of millions, spread over a large area. I need not take into account the division of the country. We are not a military nation and we grow or can grow our own foodstuffs and enough cotton for our requirements. When this control is removed, the nation will breathe free, it will have the right to make mistakes. This ancient method of progressing by making mistakes and correcting them, is the proper way. Keep a child in cotton wools and stunt it or kill it. If you will let it develop into a robust man, you will expose its body to all weathers,

teaching him how to defy them. Precisely, in the same manner, any government worth the name, has to show the nation how to face deficits, bad weathers and other handicaps of life, through its collective effort, instead of its being effortlessly helped to live anyhow.

"Thus considered, decontrol means that the business of foresight is transferred from the few members of the Government to the millions composing the nation. The Government will have new tasks to perform towards the nation, so as to enable it to discharge the duty devolved upon it. The methods of transport have to be put in order and the methods of growing more food have to be brought home to the people in general, and to that end, the agricultural department has to learn how to serve the small grower, rather than the capitalist grower. The Government have on the one hand to trust all arms of the nation, as well as to watch and to check their movement, the regard being had always to the interest, hitherto neglected, of the small grower, who represents the largest majority of the millions. He is the consumer of his own crops, reserving a small percentage for the mere consumer who, in exchange for the foodstuffs he gets, gives cash for buying the other necessaries of life. The control has meant less payment to the grower, than he would otherwise command from the open market. Hence, to the extent that he gets a higher price, the prices of foodstuffs must rise. These, the consumer will not grudge. The Government have to see that, in the new set-up, the whole of the percentage in the rise of the prices goes to the grower. This has to be made clear to the public from day to day, or week to week, as the case may be. The wealthy factory owners or middlemen have to work in co-operation with and in subordination to the Government. I understand that the process is going on. There should be perfect co-ordination among these few men or the corporations, who have hitherto exploited the poor for their selfish purpose, and have not hesitated to enter into an unhealthy rivalry among themselves. This has to go, especially in the case of food and cloth, where the profit motive is to be wholly absent. Any successful attempt at adding to their profit, owing to decontrol, will defeat its purpose. Let us hope that these monied interests will rise to the occasion."

On December 10, Gandhi told that news had come from Ajmer that a very large number of Muslims had been scared away. Out of the remaining, some had been killed, and the poison was spreading to the villages. There was a big *dargah* at Ajmer, where the Hindus

and the Muslims both offered worship. Had they gone mad now? He wanted them all to pray for good sense to prevail. In their efforts to kill or turn out the Muslims, they would kill Hinduism. Similarly, the Muslims would kill Islam, by wiping out the Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan. The only way to live, was to let live.

On the 11th, before the prayer started, a member of the audience stood up and requested Gandhi to explain the meaning of the verse from the Koran that was recited in the prayers. Gandhi did that in his prayer speech. In the verse, the devotee called upon Allah, the All-Merciful, to save him from the clutches of the accursed Satan. He was the Lord of the Day of Judgement. Allah was one. He had no son and was not the son of anyone. In the end, was the prayer that He might lead the devotee on the path trodden by those who were blessed with His grace.

They might ask the speaker why the Muslims did the deeds that went contrary to the above teaching. He asked them in return: Did the Christians live up to the message of the Bible, or the Hindus up to the message of the Upanishads? All Muslims were not bad, and all Hindus were not good.

A refugee had written to him that, in accordance with what he had advised about the return of the non-Muslims to Pakistan the previous evening, he would like to go back, as early as possible. In the Union no one cared for the refugees and the refugees were being subjected to great hardships. The speaker agreed that the refugees were being subjected to great hardships, and that in spite of all the efforts of the Union Government to help them. It must be remembered that the task was so colossal, that the best of governments would be hard put to it to cope with it wholly to the satisfaction of everyone. He was, however, not prepared to advise anyone to return to Pakistan today. He would have to verify the statement of the peace mission and then to see what suitable arrangements could be made for the return of those who wished to go back.

Another friend had commented on his remark saying that Sardar Patel had said that the expenditure on the renovation of Somnath Temple would not be met from the state treasury. The friend saw no reason, why it should not be so met. The speaker believed that if the state spent money for such purposes for one community, it must also do so for the others. That would be wrong.

On December 15, Gandhi's written address was read out:

"Here is what pained me to read in the newspapers: 'The buildings of six municipal schools have been occupied by the refugees and in spite of the best efforts of the Delhi Municipal Committee, the refugees have not vacated them. The committee proposes to approach the police authorities to get the buildings vacated.'

"This press report appears to be reliable. It is a shameful instance of lawlessness and worse. That such a defiance can take place in the capital of the Union, reflects no credit on anybody. I am hoping that the trespassers themselves will repent of their folly and will vacate the school premises and, that failing, their friends will succeed in bringing sense to them and that the Government will not feel compelled to put their threat into execution. There is a general charge against the refugees that the terrible affliction they have gone through have not made them sober, sensible and industrious workers. Let us hope that the refugees in general and these trespassers in particular will by their repentance disprove the charge...

"A friend from Eastern Pakistan asks: 'How can I declare myself as an inhabitant of undivided India, when India is cut into two and when to be of one part excludes you from the other?' Whatever the legal pundits may say, they can never dominate the mind of man. Who can prevent the friend from declaring himself as a citizen of the world, even though legally he is not, and though he may be, as he will be, prevented from entering many states under their laws? The legal status should not worry a man, who has not reduced himself to the state of a machine, as many of us have. So long as the moral condition is sound, there is no warrant for anxiety. What every one of us has to guard against is the harbouring of ill will against a state or its people. Thus, one cannot do so against the Muslims of Pakistan or against its Government, and still claim to belong to Pakistan, as to the Union of India. Such a state, if it is general, must lead to war. Any state will declare traitorous the conduct of every inhabitant, who entertains hostility against it and even helping the enemy state. Loyalty cannot be divided."

In his prayer speech of the 16th, Gandhi gave the audience certain figures placed before him, indicating the results of decontrol, in as far as it had gone. As a result, the price of *gur* had fallen to eight annas a seer from one rupee. He hoped that it would fall still lower. In his youth, *gur* was sold at one anna. The price of sugar had fallen from Rs. 34 to Rs. 24, per maund. One rupee now brought one and a

half seers of pulses, instead of fourteen chhataks. The price of gram had also fallen from Rs.24 to Rs.18 per maund. The black-market price of wheat had been Rs.34 per maund. It had now come down to Rs.24 per maund. He was rightly accused of knowing nothing about orthodox economics and the fluctuations of prices. He talked of decontrol in his ignorance, but the consequences would have to be borne by the poor. The results, however, so far, had falsified the fears. The poor people seemed to be better off, without the control. He had received numerous congratulations for decontrol. He could not appropriate them, for many causes and many persons had worked towards the same end. If the middleman and the grower thought more of the whole country than of themselves, then he had no doubt that the decontrol all round would be an unmixed blessing. All fear about decontrol was due to the supposition that the business community would never play the game. The sceptics distrusted the producer and the middleman. If the majority of the people were selfish and untrustworthy, how could democracy or panchayat raj work? He would ask the Government to utilize the services of non-civilians equally with those of the civilians. The difference was that the latter were highly paid and the former were volunteers. Each was amenable to law for any fraud.

He had received several complaints about the high salaries of the civil servants. The civil service could not be done away with, all of a sudden. Their numbers had already been reduced, with the result that those remaining had to work harder. The Sardar had, therefore, congratulated them for their work. The speaker did not grudge credit where it was deserved, but he could not help noting that they drew salaries which, before independence, the Congress had considered too much. The real civil service were the people. After all, Congressmen had been working without any salaries in the past. If any Congressman becomes a parliamentary secretary today, why should he be paid a high salary? He did not know that parliamentary secretaries were needed. The Congress party must be chary of imposing more paid secretaries on the Government. It would be wrong to tone down the high standard, the Congress had set before the country in the past. Greater care was necessary, in that they had now crores at their disposal. It would be imprudent to let the expenditure go up, when the income remained stationary. Every business firm had to see that the credit side was larger than the debit side. Could they run the business

of free India by ignoring this basic fact? They had some money to-day and they could squander it in any way they liked. But it would not last long, unless they acted like wise business men.

In his prayer speech on December 19, Gandhi told the audience that he had been to meet the Meos, who had been rendered homeless. Many had been driven away from Alwar and Bharatpur. Some had gone to Pakistan, others were undecided, whether they should stay or go away. Dr. Gopichand Bhargava had accompanied him and had assured the Meos, that those who wanted to stay, had every right to do so. Their lives and their property would be safeguarded by his Government. The speaker stated that he could never be reconciled to the exchange of population. To uproot lakhs and lakhs of men, women and children from their homes, was a devilish act. In the face of the calamity, it was idle to speculate, as to who started, or whose was the greater violence. Such calculation was not the way to peace. Those who wanted to go to Pakistan of their own accord, were free to do so. No one would obstruct them. Nor could any one force them to leave the Union. The Meos were a fighting community. Some said that they were like a criminal tribe. Even if the charge was true, the state could not banish them. The right way would be to reform and induce them to become worthy citizens.

On the 20th, Gandhi expressed deep sorrow at the recrudescence of trouble in Delhi, even though it was on a very minor scale. If the Hindus and the Sikhs of Delhi, or the sufferers of Pakistan in Delhi were determined not to let the Muslims stay here, they should say so boldly and openly, and the Government should declare that they could offer the affected Muslims no protection. It would be a declaration of bankruptcy on the part of the Government. That would mean a decline and extinction of the Hindu and the Sikh religions, if the disease spread. And similarly, if Pakistan would let no Hindu or Sikh stay in Pakistan with safety and honour, it would mean extinction of Islam in India. He wanted them to shed all cowardice. He held it to be cowardice to force out any one by indirect means. If the Muslims were bad, goodness on the part of the Hindus and the Sikhs would make them good.

On the 21st, his address was read out at the prayer meeting:

"Not even eight miles from here is the mausoleum of Kutubuddin Chishti Saheb, which is reputed to be second in sanctity to the one in Ajmer. Both are visited not only by the Muslims, but by thousands

of Hindus and other non-Muslims, in equal veneration. Hindu wrath visited the sacred place in early September last. The Muslims in the surroundings felt compelled to vacate their favourite home, which had been such, for close on four centuries. It would be unnecessary to mention this tragic occurrence, but for the fact that the place is still deserted by the Muslims, however much they may be devoted to the mausoleum. It behoves the Hindus, the Sikhs, the officials, immediately in charge, and the ministers to wipe out the disgrace and to reinstate the place in all its original glory. What I have said here, is equally applicable to all the Muslim places of worship, in and around Delhi and elsewhere in the Indian Union. It is high time that both the Governments, by their firm action, made it clear to their respective majorities, that they could no longer tolerate desecration of the places of worship, big or insignificant. All damage done to them, should be repaired without delay.

"In view of the decision recently arrived at by the Muslim League meeting held in Karachi, and in view of the meeting to be held in Lucknow, at the instance of Maulana Azad, the Muslim friends have been asking me, whether, if they were the members of the Muslim League, they should also attend the meeting of the Muslim League members to be held in Madras, and, in any event what the attitude of the members of the Muslim League in the Union should be. I have no doubt, that if they are invited specially or publicly, they should attend the Lucknow meeting, as also the later meeting at Madras. And at each meeting, they should express their views fearlessly and frankly. That the Muslims in the Indian Union find themselves in a minority, without the protection from the majority in Pakistan, is no disadvantage, if they at all followed the technique of non-violence during the past thirty years. It was not necessary for them to have faith in non-violence, to be able to appreciate the fact that a minority, however small it might be, never has any cause for fear, as to the preservation of their honour and all that must be near and dear to man. Man is so made that, if he understood his Maker and himself as made in His image, no power on earth could rob him of self-respect, except he himself. A dear English friend in Johannesburg, while I was fighting the mighty Government of the Transvaal, told me, that he always made common cause with the minorities. For, he said, the minorities were hardly ever in the wrong, and if they were, they could be weaned from it without difficulty, whereas majorities

could not be, owing to the intoxication that power gave them. The English friend had uttered a great truth, if by the majority we would also understand the power, that exclusive possession of weapons of destruction gave an aggregate of men. We know to our cost, that a handful of Englishmen were able to be the majority, keeping under their heels millions of Indians by the possession of arms, which India did not have and could not know how to wield them, even if she had. It is a thousand pities, that neither the Hindus nor the Muslims learnt the lesson, whilst the English power was in operation in our country. The Union Muslims are now free from the oppressiveness they were under, whilst they were falsely proud of the Muslim majority in the West and in the East. If they would realize the virtue of being in a minority, they would know that they could now express in their own lives the best that is in Islam. Will they remember that Islam gave its best during the Prophet's ministry in Mecca? Christianity waned, when Constantine came to it. But I must not here carry this argument further. My advice is based upon implicit belief in it. Therefore, if my Muslim friends do not share the belief, they will perhaps do well to reject the advice.

"In my opinion, while they should hold themselves in readiness to join the Congress, they should refrain from applying for admission, until they are welcomed with open arms and on terms of absolute equality. In theory, at least, the Congress has no major and no minor communities. It has no religion, but the religion of humanity. For the Congress, every man and every woman is equal to any other. The Congress is a purely secular, political, national organization in which Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jews are equal. Because the Congress has not always been able to live up to its professions, it has appeared to many Muslims as a predominantly caste Hindu organization. Any way, the Muslims should have dignified aloofness, so long as the tension lasts. They would be in the Congress, when their services are wanted by it. In the meantime, they should be of the Congress, even as I am. That I have an influence, without being a four-anna member, is because I have served the Congress faithfully, ever since my return from South Africa in 1915. Every Muslim can do so from now, and he will realize that his services are as much valued, as mine. Today, every Muslim is assumed to be a Leaguer and, therefore, to be an enemy of the Congress. Such unfortunately has been the teaching of the Muslim League. There is now not the

slightest cause for enmity. Four months are too short a period, to be free from the communal poison. Unfortunately for this unhappy land, the Hindus and the Sikhs mistook the poison for nectar, and they have, therefore, become the enemies of the Muslims of India, and have to their disgrace retaliated and become so, even with the Muslims of Pakistan. I would, therefore, strongly urge the Muslim minority to rise superior to the poisonous atmosphere, and live down the thoughtless prejudice by proving by their exemplary conduct that the only honourable way of living in the Indian Union is that they should be full citizens, without any mental reservations. It follows then that the Muslim League cannot remain a political organization, even as the Hindu Mahasabha, or the Sikh Sabha, or the Parsi Sabha cannot. They may function as religious organizations for the internal religious reform, for the purpose of exploring the best and living the best that is in their religions. Then they will purify the atmosphere of all poison and will vie with one another in well-doing. They will be friendly to one another, and thus help the state. Their political ambition can only be satisfied through the Congress, whether they are in it, or not. The Congress will be a caucus, when it thinks of those only who are in it. It has very few such, even now. It has as yet an unrivalled position, because it strives to represent the whole of India, without exception. It aims to serve even unto this last."

Some people from Bahawalpur had brought with them placards to the prayer ground, on which was written: "Save 70,000 Hindus and Sikhs of Bahawalpur." Gandhi referred to the subject on the 23rd. Two friends had seen him during the day in the same connection, and said that they were contemplating fasting before the Governor-General's house, till arrangements were made for the evacuation of the Hindus and the Sikhs from Bahawalpur. The speaker said that such a step would help none. The Governor-General had no power today, except such as he derived from his Cabinet. He had no longer the might of the British Empire at his back. Nor could he utilize his power, as a fine warrior that he was. For the time being, he had put it in cold storage. The speaker nevertheless agreed that arrangements should be made to bring the Hindus and the Sikhs from Bahawalpur. It was the duty of the Nawab of Bahawalpur to make arrangements to send them, wherever they wanted to go outside Pakistan. Bahawalpur was, he understood, made principally by the Sikhs. And yet, they and the Hindus had to suffer terribly. The nawab could not disown

responsibility in the matter. But let bygones be bygones. He made an appeal to the nawab to make a declaration that not a hair of the head of any Hindu and Sikh would be touched in the Bahawalpur state, till arrangements were made for their evacuation. During the interval they should be well looked after.

In his speech on December 24, Gandhi said that some Sikh friends had been coming to see him. And he had seen too some of the newspaper cuttings. There seemed to be a general impression, that he had of late become an enemy of the Sikhs. They would not have worried so much about that, but for the fact that his word seemed to carry weight with the world outside India. The world thought that India had won her independence through non-violence, and, if it was so, it was a unique thing in history. How he wished that it was really so! But he had already declared that it was not. The cowardly or the weak and the lame of heart could never practise non-violence. The physically disabled could always practise non-violence, if they had the grace of God. He had blindly thought that the Indian fight was non-violent. But the events that had taken place lately, had opened his eyes to the fact, that theirs was the passive resistance of the weak. If the Indians had really been bravely non-violent, they could never have indulged in the acts of which they were guilty. They all had before them the unique instance of Prahlad, the twelve-year-old boy, who had alone stood up against the might of the king, his father. He would rely upon none but God.

Gandhi remarked that he could not but laugh at the anger of the Sikh friends. They attributed to him numerous things that he never had said. He made no distinction between the Hindus, the Sikhs, and the Muslims. He had criticized the Sikhs for their drink habit and for the atrocities that they were reported to have committed. But that did not mean that all the Sikhs had acted in the wrong manner. Nor did it mean that the Hindus could be absolved. As the Sikhs were a virile race, he certainly expected more from them. He had freely acknowledged their many merits, if he had pointed out their faults. Those who tried to minimize or to overlook cruel deeds done, were the enemies of the Sikhs; not he, who owned no enemy. Whatever he had said, he had said as a staunch friend of the Sikhs. He was not unaware of the lofty teachings of the Granth Saheb. The Sikh friends should never fear that they would be misjudged by the world, because of what he had said.

On December 25, Gandhi gave a talk on Kashmir. He said that he had seen in the newspapers some reference to an arbitration over the issue of Kashmir. Were the Union of India and Pakistan always to depend on a third party to settle their disputes? How long would they go on quarrelling?

There was some talk about the division of Kashmir. It was fantastic. It was more than enough that India had been divided into two. One would have thought it impossible for man to divide a country, which God had made one. Yet it had happened and the Congress and the Muslim League had decided upon it, though for different reasons. But that did not mean that the process of dividing should be further extended. If Kashmir was to be divided, why not other states? Where would this process end?

It was said at first that Kashmir was attacked by the raiders. But as time went on, it became very clear that Pakistan was at the back of the attack. He had a passage from an Urdu daily, *Zamindar*, read out to him during the day. In that, the Muslims were openly invited for recruitment and for joining the jehad. Abuses were showered all round. He knew Maulana Zafar Ali Khan during the Khilafat days. In those days too the maulana could curb his tongue with difficulty. Now evidently, he seemed to have no check on his tongue or pen. Did he mean that the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs were to be perpetual enemies? Whatever the provocation, he advised the Hindus and the Sikhs not to retaliate.

The facts seemed to be that Pakistan was at the back of the attack on Kashmir. The Union troops had been sent there at the call of the people of Kashmir, as well as the maharaja, to help them in defending the beautiful valley. He considered Sheikh Abdullah Saheb to be the real head of Kashmir. Everyone who had been to Kashmir, had told him what an unrivalled hold the Sheikh Saheb had on the Muslim masses and on the few non-Muslims in Kashmir. In these days, an Indian prince could remain one, only as the titular head, even as the English King was.

He had heard of the murders of numberless Muslims and of the abduction of the Muslim girls in Jammu. The maharaja must own the responsibility. The Dogra troops were under his direct control. He had not yet become the mere constitutional head and, therefore, he must be held responsible for all the acts, good or bad, of the people under his rule. Sheikh Abdullah Saheb had been to Jammu and he

had tried to allay passions. The speaker would advise the maharaja to step aside along with his minister, in view of what had taken place in Jammu, and give the fullest opportunity to Sheikh Abdullah and the people of Kashmir to deal with the situation. Such a graceful act would become him, as the head of a very great and important state in India.

Pakistan was proud of being the biggest Islamic State in the world. But they could not be proud of themselves, unless they ensured justice to every single Hindu and Sikh in that State.

If Pakistan was to become a worthy state, let the Pakistan and the Union representatives sit down and thrash out the Kashmir affair, as they had already done in the case of many other things. If they could not do so, why could they not choose from among themselves good, true persons, who would direct their steps? The first step was an open and sincere confession of the past lapses. Hearty repentance broke the edge of a guilt and led the way to proper understanding. The Congress Government could never stand for the princes, against their people. They could only deal with the princes as the trustees of their people.

Lastly, he referred to an Urdu magazine, published in the Indian Union, wherein was a verse to the effect that everyone was talking of the Somnath Temple that day. But in order to avenge the happenings in Junagadh, a new Ghaznavi would have to come from Ghazni. It had deeply hurt him. How could any Muslim worth the name in the Indian Union entertain such thoughts? Why should he not be proud to associate himself with the act of the renovation of the Somnath Temple? He hoped that no true Muslim would be proud of the acts which were imputed to Mahmood Ghaznavi. He had pledged his life to secure safety for the Muslims in the Indian Union. He would not swerve from his pledge, because he believed in returning good for evil. He asked the Hindus and the Sikhs not to be carried away by passions. But he asked his Muslim friends not to make the task of reconciliation more difficult, than it was. He would not have referred to the mischievous couplet, but for the fact that it was to be found in an important publication.

On the 27th, the prayer meeting was held at the Sammalka village, where a panchayat *ghar* had been built. Gandhi was presented with garlands at the entrance. An address was also presented. Addressing the gathering, Gandhi said that the meeting was held for prayers.

At such a meeting, garlands, addresses and shouts were out of place. He would have been pleased, if they had omitted them. They had mentioned truth and non-violence in their address, but if they did not practise those virtues, there was no point in talking about them. On the contrary, mere mention of them was harmful. Ever since his return from South Africa, he had visited thousands of Indian villages. He knew how these addresses were prepared. Someone wrote them out and someone else read them parrot-wise, and that was the end of it. There must be consistency between one's thoughts, words and actions. Driving away the minority community or ill-treating them did not fit in with the profession of non-violence. Independence did not mean that people could act in any way they liked. Could anyone pray for and work for the freedom to commit murders and tell lies? That would be surrender to Satan, instead of God.

Gandhi congratulated them on having built a panchayat *ghar*. Unless they did the work of the panchayat, the effort would be a waste of time and labour. Distinguished travellers from the world came to India, in the days of yore, from China and other countries. They all came in quest of knowledge, and they put up with great hardships in travelling. They had reported that in India, there was no theft, people were honest and industrious. They needed no locks for their doors. In those days, there was no multiplicity of castes, as at present. It was the function of the panchayats to revive honesty and industry. If he asked them after one year, would they show that they had no court, save their panchayat? It was the function of the panchayats to teach the villagers to avoid disputes, if they had to settle them. That would ensure speedy justice, without any expenditure. They would need neither the police, nor the military.

Then the panchayat should work for cattle improvement. They should show steady increase in the milk yield. Our cattle had become a burden on the land, for want of care.

The panchayat should also see to an increase in the quantity of the foodstuff grown in their village. That was to be accomplished by properly manuring the soil. The Compost Conference, recently held in Delhi, had told them how the excreta of the animals and human beings, mixed with rubbish, could be turned into valuable manure. This manure increased the fertility of the soil. Then they must see to the cleanliness of their village and its inhabitants. They must be clean and healthy in body and mind.

He hoped that they would have no cinema house. People argued that the cinema could be a potent means of education. That might come true some day, but at the moment, he saw how much harm the cinema was actually doing. People had their indigenous games. They should banish intoxicating drinks and drugs from their midst. He hoped that they would also eradicate untouchability, if there was any trace of it still left in their village. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis and the Christians should all live, as brothers and sisters. If they achieved all he had mentioned, they would demonstrate real independence, and the people from all over India would come to see their model village and take inspiration from it. May God crown their endeavours with success.

On the 28th, Gandhi told that he was daily receiving telegrams and letters, congratulating him on the removal of controls. It had a miraculous effect all round and the prices had already gone down. Although the control on cloth was still there, the prices of towels, etc., he was told, had gone down. The business men knew that he was merely voicing the opinion of the millions, when he stated that the controls should go. The goods of black market were, therefore, now coming into the open market and were selling at reasonable prices. He was also told that the removal of the control had brought much relief to the people. He could take no credit for what was happening in the matter of controls. The real credit went to the masses, whose wish he was only voicing. If his personal voice had any effect, then the unseemly communal trouble would have ceased long ago. In this matter, they dubbed him as a visionary and a madcap. But he knew that they were wrong and he was right. If he had been practical and right on many occasions in the past, why was he unpractical in this matter of life and death? Tulsidas had said that the essence of religion was mercy and forgiveness. And that was exactly what he had been asking them to follow.

He emphasized that the controls on cloth and firewood and petrol should also be removed forthwith. He had dealt with cloth control at the meeting of business men. As for firewood, the people were not going to consume more firewood than was necessary, if the control was removed. Removal of the control could not adversely affect the poor in the matter of firewood. It was the control on petrol that was hitting them hard on all sides, because he understood that it hampered road transport. They did not have enough railway transport.

To make new railways and wagons, was a long-time project. They did not need any new railways. The removal of the control on petrol would make it wholly unnecessary. Swift road transport of the food grains, cloth and salt would lower the prices of those articles. The salt tax had gone and yet, salt had become more expensive than before. It was partly due to transport difficulty and partly due to some bungling about contracts. A few contractors were said to be fattening at the expense of the consumers. This evil must be rectified. The people should be taught to prepare salt, wherever they could. It was the easiest thing to do, now that salt was free.

On December 29, Gandhi's prayer speech was read out:

"I have been lately taken to task for daring to say, what I have said about Kashmir and the maharaja. Those who have done so have evidently failed to read my statement carefully. I have simply tendered advice which, I suppose, even the lowliest can do. And to do so, sometimes, becomes a duty, as was the case with me. What was it for? It was, if accepted, designed to raise the Maharaja Saheb in his own and in the world's esteem. His and his state's is a most unenviable position today. He is a Hindu prince, having, under his sway, a very large majority of Muslims. The invaders have called their invasion a holy war for the defence of the Muslims, reported to be ground down under the Hindu misrule! Sheikh Abdullah Saheb had been called by the maharaja to his task, at a most critical period. He is new to the task and deserves every encouragement, if he is considered fit by His Highness the Maharaja. It must be evident to the outsider, as it is to me, that Kashmir must be lost to the invaders, otherwise called the raiders, if Sheikh Abdullah Saheb's effort to hold together the Muslims and the minority fails. It would be a mistake to think that the Union army could do it. It was despatched in answer to the combined importunity of the Maharaja Saheb and the Sheikh Saheb, in order to help ward off the raiders' attack. Is it any wonder that I have advised the ruling authority to rise to the occasion and become like the King of England and, therefore, use his rule and his Dogra army, in strict accord with the advice of Sheikh Abdullah Saheb and his emergency Cabinet? The instrument of accession stands, as it is. It confers or reserves certain rights on or for the ruler. As a private individual, I have ventured to advise that the ruler should waive or should diminish the rights, and perform the duty, pertaining to the office, of a Hindu prince. If I am wrong as to my facts, I should be

corrected. If I err in my conception of Hinduism and of the duty of a Hindu prince, I am out of court. If Sheikh Abdullah Saheb is erring in the discharge of his duty, as the chief of the Cabinet, or as a devout Muslim, he should certainly step aside and should give place to a better man. It is on the Kashmir soil, that Islam and Hinduism are being weighed now. If both pull their weight correctly and in the same direction, the chief actors will cover themselves with glory and nothing can move them from their joint credit. My sole hope and prayer is that Kashmir should become a beacon light to this benighted sub-continent.

"So much for the Maharaja Saheb and the Sheikh Saheb. Will not the Government of Pakistan and the Government of the Indian Union close ranks and come to an amicable settlement with the assistance of impartial Indians? Or, has impartiality fled from India? I am sure, it has not."

Presiding over the momentous conference of the Muslims of the Union in Lucknow on December 27, Maulana Azad said that he had no new lead to give to his co-religionists and nothing to say which he had not said before. It was no time to reopen old controversies or enter into acrimonious debate, as might have been, if the Muslims, or a majority of them, had not allowed themselves to be influenced by the Muslim League ideology. The partition was now a fact, and he did not care even to speak of the possibility, in some distant future, of a re-union of the separated parts. The scope of the present conference being limited to the fashioning of a new programme for the bewildered Muslims of the Union, the maulana went straight to the main issue. Now that the objective of the Muslim League had been achieved and communalism had found a homeland of its own, it was time to read the League's epitaph and banish from India at least all that it stood for. The maulana revealed that the decision to hold the last month's consultative conference of the Muslim leaders in Delhi was not taken on a sudden impulse, but at the persuasion of some of the top-rank League leaders, who wanted a new lead. Maulana Azad was referring evidently to the approach made to him by Mr. Khaliquzzaman, before he went over to Pakistan. The Leaguers not only did not participate in the Delhi discussions, but held their own meeting in Calcutta. Azad made it clear that he was not asking the Muslim community to join the Congress. They were free to join any non-communal political party.

The Muslims of the Indian Union passed a resolution deciding to abjure communal politics, which had tended to encourage social and political reaction and injured the national life by encouraging false and unreal divisions and by fostering mutual hatred and suspicion among the different communities.

The conference passed another resolution calling on the Muslims of the Indian Union to be the members only of the non-communal political organizations and advised them to join the Indian National Congress, which had been the main bastion of "freedom and unity and is pledged to absolute equality of rights and opportunities for members of all communities."

Two prominent Muslim Leaguers were relating to Gandhi, how the Indian Union Muslims were eager to join the Congress. Gandhi felt much hurt. "I do not like this stampede to join the Congress," he told them. "They should—it is their right to join the Congress. But the time for it, in my opinion, is not yet. I would rather that they waited, till the Congress was ready to welcome them with open arms. Today, that warmth is lacking. Under the circumstances, it would be best for them to serve the Congress from outside, even as I am doing."

Voice In The Wilderness

1947–1948

DURING December 1947, Gandhi held a series of discussions—one with the Hindustani Talimi Sangh group, the other with members of the Constructive Programme Committee. The gathering included seasoned soldiers of many a non-violent struggle that he had led during the last thirty years of his life. Some of them had been with him from the very beginning of his political career in India.

Hitherto, non-violence had been used in offering resistance to the alien Government; the problem now was to run the Government. He had made the discovery that during the struggle for independence, what he had taken to be non-violence was not really non-violence, but passive resistance only—the weapon of the weak, a temporary expedient, which could be and was actually discarded by the people, as soon as there was an opportunity to resort to violence. The conception of non-violence as the weapon of the strong, he saw, must remain a chimera and a dream, and non-violence had no future as world power and harbinger of universal peace, unless non-violence could be shown to be capable of retaining and defending the power which it had helped to win; in other words, unless it could successfully act upon and guide power politics. His limited experiment with the Gandhi Seva Sangh had brought home the fact that the moment non-violence assumed power, it contradicted itself and became contaminated. The question was, whether non-violence could at all be used to influence power politics, without succumbing to its corrupting influence, and if so how.

There were some workers, who were worried at the paradox which the free India Government presented. The Congress had sworn adherence to the constructive programme for years, while it was in the wilderness. But having come into power, it showed the signs of giving it the go-by. Was not the remedy for those who had faith in the constructive work to enter the Government and to use it for the purpose

of building up a non-violent social order? Gandhi was opposed to it, but he believed that the purpose could be achieved, if the various organizations, which he had founded for carrying on the constructive work, came up to the standard, which he had set to them. And as a preparatory step to the discharge of that role, he recommended the unification and co-ordination of those organizations into one body. He placed the onus of the transformation on the shoulders of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. It should be easy for them to do that, if Nayee Talim was, what he had envisaged it to be. What he had proposed, was only a part of adult education. "Nayee Talim is today on its trial. It has either to transform the prevailing atmosphere, or perish in the attempt."

He then went on to describe another challenge that had confronted Nayee Talim. It threatened all that they stood for and fought for all these years. "There is one section in the country today in our midst, which holds that the Hindus and the Muslims cannot co-exist, that either the Muslims should get out of Hindustan, or should live here as the vassals of the Hindus. Similarly, in Pakistan, only the Muslims should remain. It is a poisonous doctrine; in it lies the root of Pakistan. Pakistan has come into being; their dream has vanished, but the virus has remained. I have pledged myself to resist this doctrine and this ideology and to do or die in the attempt. But to correct the wrong psychology of the people is the function of Nayee Talim."

Being invited to express his opinion, Dr. Zakir Husain said that while in principle what Gandhi had said was unexceptionable, still there was need to hasten slowly. Things had changed considerably after independence. Everybody felt the urge and impatience to make new and daring experiments and the need for absolutely a free hand. If the merger resulted in maladjustment, it might retard, instead of helping progress.

A suggestion was then made that they might function, as separate branches of a tree, which have sprung from a common trunk, and a reference was made in that connection to the Gandhi Seva Sangh, which was described as functioning as the parent trunk, at one time. But Gandhi smelt danger in that. He did not want the constructive workers' organization to be drawn into power politics and become a rival to the Congress or the Government in the contest for political power. "Gandhi Seva Sangh is no longer there. Nor did it attempt to rally all the constructive workers under one organization. It did

once make a shortlived attempt to enter into and purify the politics of the country, but had to admit defeat."

Dr. Zakir Husain next took up the argument saying: "The various organizations were created separately as *ad hoc* bodies to perform certain specific functions. If they are united into one body, it will not be possible to keep power politics out of it."

Gandhi replied: "If the united constructive workers' sangh tries to go into power politics, it would spell its ruin. Or else, why should I myself not have gone into politics and tried to run the Government my way? Those who are holding the reins of power today, would easily have stepped aside and made room for me, but whilst they are in charge, they can carry on, only according to their own lights. But I do not want to take power into my hands. By abjuring power and by devoting ourselves to pure and selfless service of the voters, we can guide and influence them. It would give us far more real power than we shall have by going into the Government. But a stage may come, when the people themselves may feel and say that they want us and no one else to wield the power. The question could then be considered. I shall most probably be not alive then. But, when that time comes, the sanghs will produce from amongst them someone who will take over the reins of the administration. By that time, India shall have become an ideal state."

Dr. Zakir Husain asked: "Shall not we need ideal men, in order to inaugurate and run the ideal state?"

Gandhi replied: "We can send men of our choice, without going into the Government ourselves. Today, everybody in the Congress is running after power. That presages grave danger. Let us not be in the same cry, as the power-seekers. Today, many Congressmen say: 'Pandit Jawaharlal is getting so much salary, why should not we?' They forget that a person of Jawaharlalji's talents could any day have commanded a far greater emolument, than he is getting today. If an ordinary humble worker like myself, who neither needs, nor has the capacity to earn independently, say, Rs. 3,000, per month, draws that much amount as salary, it is a deplorable thing. It is my firm view, that we should keep altogether aloof from power politics and its contagion."

In the meeting convened by the Constructive Works Committee of the Congress, Kripalani, Shankarrao Deo and R. R. Diwakar posed the question to Gandhi, whether, if the Congress having captured

power failed to give to the constructive work sufficient importance or attention, would it not be better for all the constructive workers to form themselves into a separate body for the vigorous prosecution of the constructive work? Such a body should not abjure or run away from power either, but go into the Government, and take power and use it for the furtherance of the constructive programme. They would thus accomplish in five years what, as a reformatory group outside the Government, they would not be able to do in fifty years. To-day, the constructive workers were confronted with a paradox. For instance, they praised *gur*, but their Government were sanctioning the erection of new sugar mills. They talked of expanding the khadi production, but the Provincial Governments were increasing the number of textile mills. Why was it that the Congress, which had sworn adherence to the constructive work, year after year, when it was in the wilderness, was pursuing a halting policy in regard to it, now that it had got the power?

Gandhi replied: "It is difficult to answer the question: why constructive work is making so little headway, although the Congress has sworn adherence to it for years and men like Jawaharlal, Rajendra Babu and Vallabhbhai are at the helm of the affairs. All the sanghs, except the Harijan Sevak Sangh, were brought into being by the Congress. Why is it then that the workers of those sanghs lack the power to make the Government go the whole hog with them? The fault, I suggest, lies with us, the constructive workers. We had faith in constructive work, but our faith was not deep or enlightened enough to illumine our intellect and so our growth has been lop-sided. The criticism levelled against the constructive workers is, that they are generally lacking in imagination and intellect. Our intelligentsia are not lacking in sympathy. Reason, as a rule, follows in the foot-steps of feeling. But we have not sufficiently penetrated their hearts to convince their reason."

He then proceeded to describe how the constructive work came to be adopted by the Congress as a part of the non-co-operation programme. There was a mass upheaval. People thought that it was a good way to fight the British. There was a country-wide awakening. In due course, the intelligentsia too were drawn in. As a result, we got our independence. The fight being over, our interest in the constructive programme waned. The constructive work is not a strategy, or a technique of fighting. The constructive work connotes a way of

life. It can be worked only by those men, who have adopted it by the heart, as well as by the intellect.

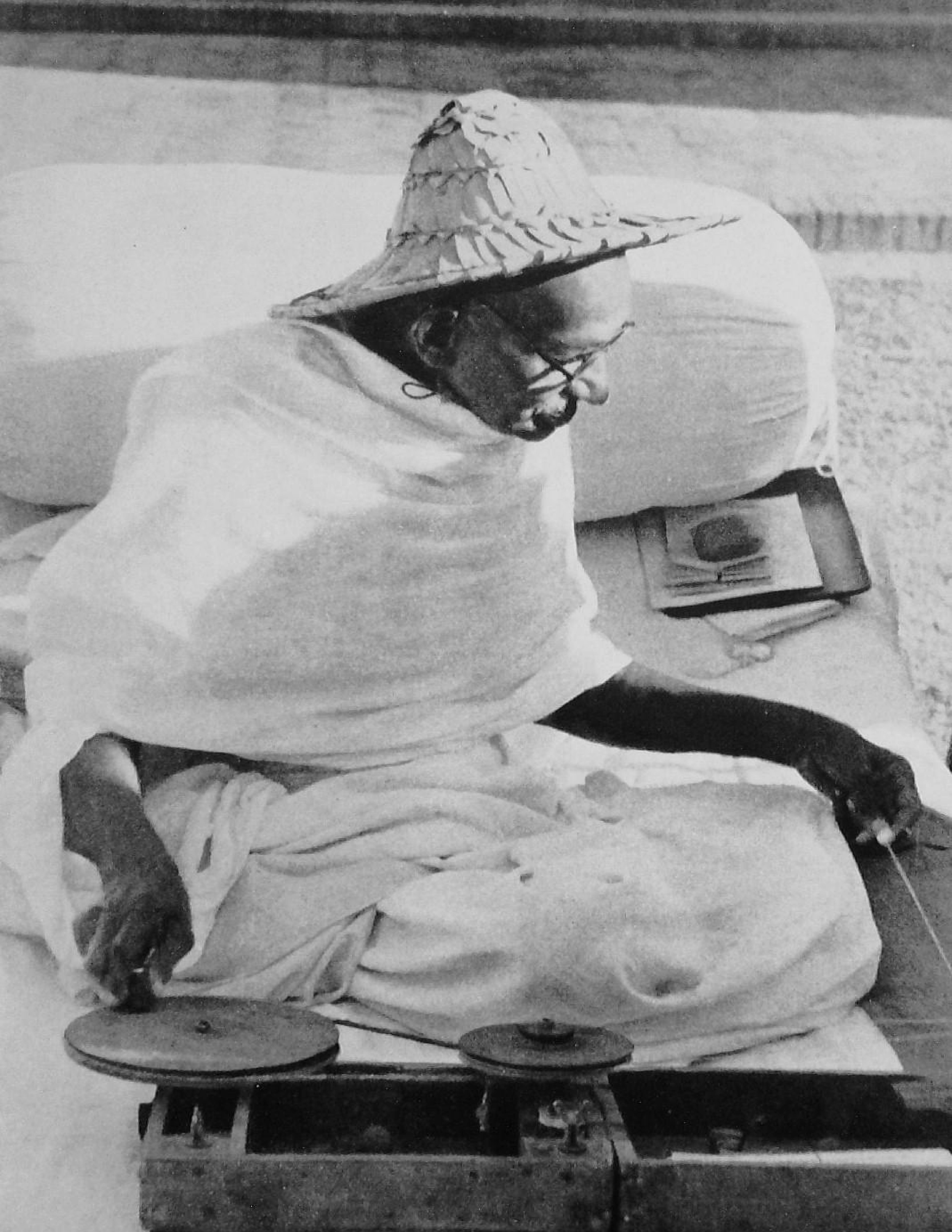
He then warmed up and said:

"The Congress lent the constructive workers' sanghs its name. It gave them the charter to function. But the Congressmen failed to come up to the scratch and shoulder the burden. Such is our bankruptcy. If these sanghs could come together and could work under the direction of a jointly chosen representative, it would mark a big step in advance. To set our own house in order, is the first indispensable requisite, if we want to influence political power. If all the sanghs give a good account of themselves, work unitedly and in co-operation, without a jar or jolt, it would be a grand thing. But they must not do it for the sake of popularity, or hanker for political power, even in their dreams. Soon we shall have adult suffrage. It is a good thing. But to regard adult suffrage as a means for the capture of political power, would be to put it to a corrupt use.

"The objective of the constructive work organization is to generate political power. But if we may say that political power having come, it must be ours as a prize for our labours, it would degrade us and spell our ruin. Take the case of the Charkha Sangh. It has the largest membership of all the sanghs. But we have never tried to get its members enrolled on the voters' list. It was suggested at one time, that we should get their names enrolled on the Congress register. I had opposed it. 'Do we want to capture the Congress?' I asked them. That would be tantamount to killing it. The Congress can be ours, only by right of service. Today, we have our own Government. Under the adult suffrage, if we are worth our salt, then we should have that hold upon the people, that whomsoever we might choose, should be returned. In Sevagram, I deprecated the proposal of our people enrolling themselves as voters. What actually happened was that the people from the village came and sought our advice, as to whom they should give their vote, because they knew that we were their true servants and had no axe of our own to grind.

"Today, politics has become corrupt. Anybody who goes into it, is contaminated. Let us keep out of it altogether. Our influence will grow thereby. The greater our inner purity, the greater shall be our hold on the people, without any effort on our part.

"My eyes have now been opened, and I see that what we practised during the fight with the British under the name of non-violence, was

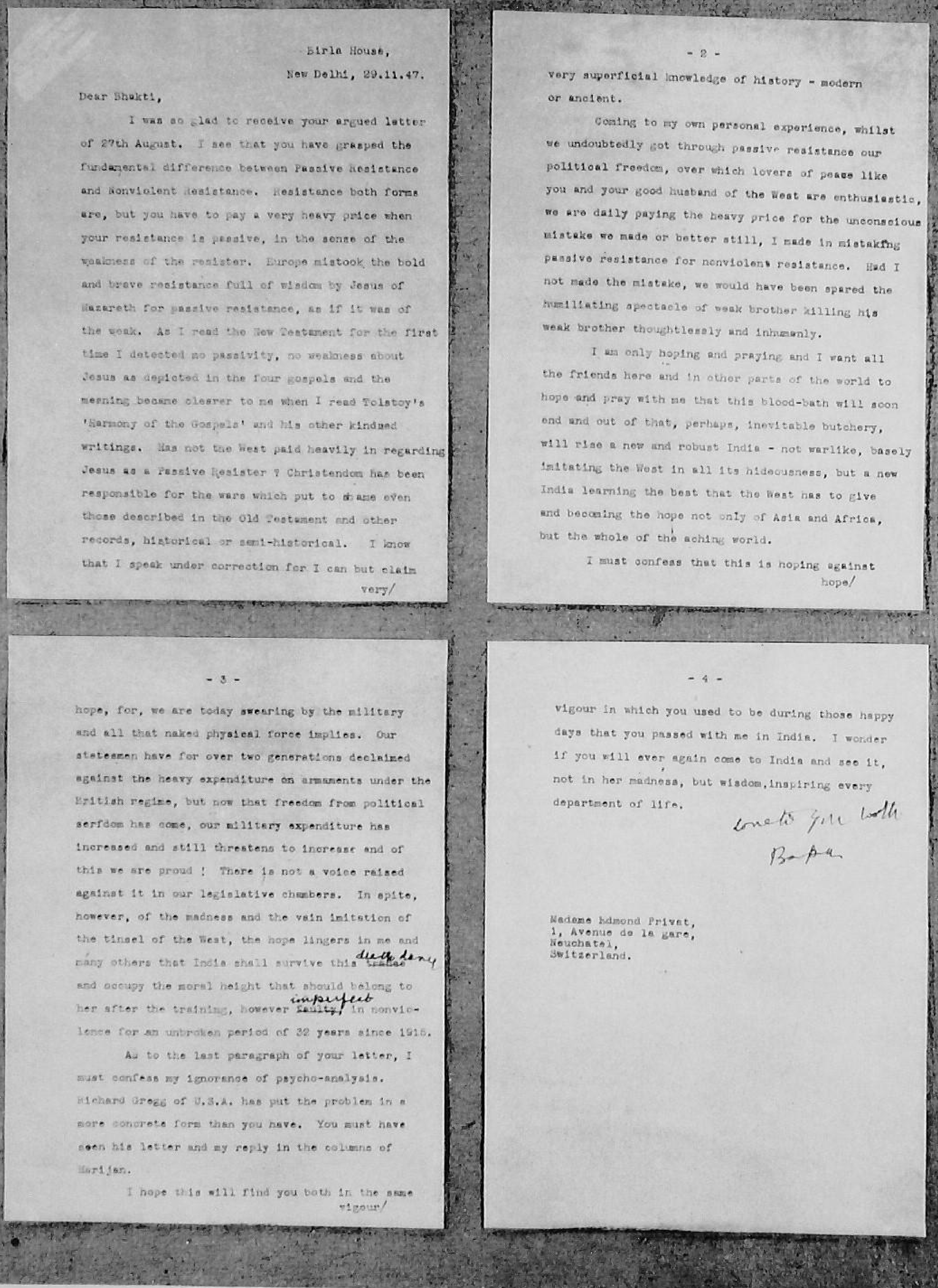


Courtesy : Dahyabhai Patel

Gandhi in Noakhali hat, Delhi, November 1947

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi at the All-India Radio, New Delhi, from where he gave a broadcast message to refugees on November 12, 1947



Birla House,

New Delhi, 29.11.47.

Dear Bhakti,

I was so glad to receive your argued letter of 27th August. I see that you have grasped the fundamental difference between Passive Resistance and Nonviolent Resistance. Resistance both forms are, but you have to pay a very heavy price when your resistance is passive, in the sense of the weakness of the resister. Europe mistook the bold and brave resistance full of wisdom by Jesus of Nazareth for passive resistance, as if it was of the weak. As I read the New Testament for the first time I detected no passivity, no weakness about Jesus as depicted in the four gospels and the meaning became clearer to me when I read Tolstoy's 'Harmony of the Gospels' and his other kindred writings. Has not the West paid heavily in regarding Jesus as a Passive Resister ? Christendom has been responsible for the wars which put to shame even those described in the Old Testament and other records, historical or semi-historical. I know that I speak under correction for I can but claim very/

\- 2 -

very superficial knowledge of history - modern or ancient.

Coming to my own personal experience, whilst we undoubtedly got through passive resistance our political freedom, over which lovers of peace like you and your good husband of the West are enthusiastic, we are daily paying the heavy price for the unconscious mistake we made or better still, I made in mistaking passive resistance for nonviolent resistance. Had I not made the mistake, we would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of weak brother killing his weak brother thoughtlessly and inhumanly.

I am only hoping and praying and I want all the friends here and in other parts of the world to hope and pray with me that this blood-bath will soon end and out of that, perhaps, inevitable butchery, will rise a new and robust India - not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of the aching world.

I must confess that this is hoping against hope/

\- 3 -

hope, for, we are today swearing by the military and all that naked physical force implies. Our statesmen have for over two generations declaimed against the heavy expenditure on armaments under the British regime, but now that freedom from political serfdom has come, our military expenditure has increased and still threatens to increase and of this we are proud ! There is not a voice raised against it in our legislative chambers. In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this ~~trance~~ death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however ~~faulty~~ imperfect, in nonviolence for an unbroken period of 32 years since 1915.

As to the last paragraph of your letter, I must confess my ignorance of psycho-analysis. Richard Gregg of U.S.A. has put the problem in a more concrete form than you have. You must have seen his letter and my reply in the columns of Harijan.

I hope this will find you both in the same vigour/

\- 4 -

vigour in which you used to be during those happy days that you passed with me in India. I wonder if you will ever again come to India and see it, not in her madness, but wisdom, inspiring every department of life.

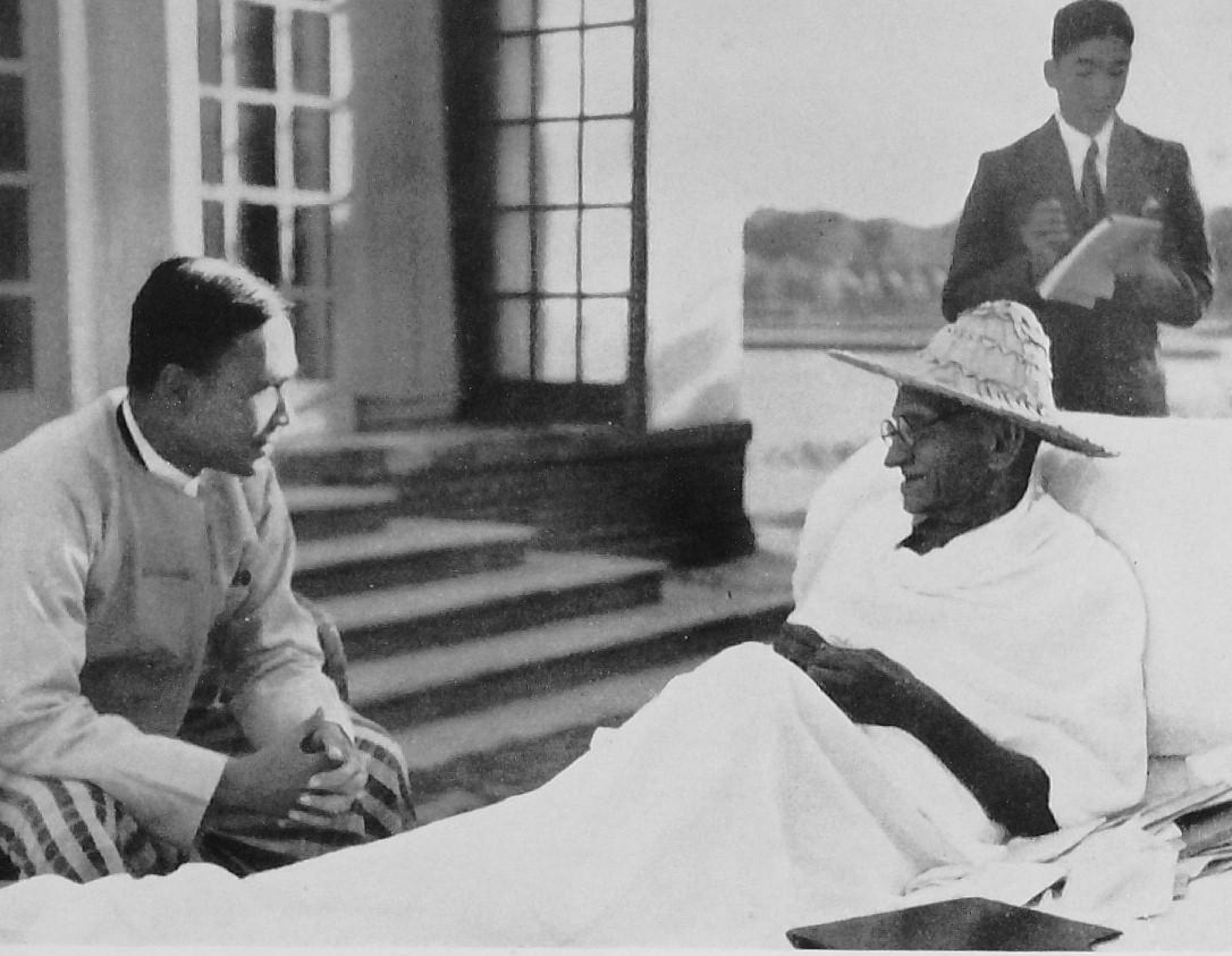
Love to you both

Bapu

Madame Edmond Privat,
1, Avenue de la gare,
Neuchatel,
Switzerland.

Courtesy : Madame Edmond Privat

Gandhi's letter to Madame Privat, dated Delhi, November 29, 1947



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Thakin Nu, Premier of Burma, with Gandhi, Delhi, December 4, 1947

not really non-violence. God had purposely sealed my eyes, as He wanted to accomplish His great purpose through me. That purpose being accomplished, He has restored to me my sight."

"Has what I am doing today penetrated your hearts?" he asked. "Then, you should have the strength to remove corruption, wheresoever it may be. You have met here as the constructive wing of the Congress. For that, you need not go into any committee. Your work is among the masses. The Constituent Assembly is today forging the constitution. Do not bother about affecting changes in it. Shriman Narayan Agarwal has written to me that in the constitution that is being framed now, there is no mention of *gram* panchayat, whereas the Congressmen have always said that the *gram* panchayat must be the foundation of our future polity. We have to resuscitate the village, make it prosperous, give it more education and more power. What good will the constitution be, if the village does not find its due place in it? What Shriman Narayanji says, appeals to me. But we must recognize the fact that the social order of our dreams cannot come through the Congress of today. Nobody knows what shape the constitution will ultimately take. I say, leave it to those who are labouring at it now. Let the constructive workers consolidate their strength, and the way to do it is through the unification of the various constructive works organizations. If we cannot do that, let each sangh continue on its way and develop its strength, as best as it can, making intelligence more and more the hall-mark of all its activity. The Charkha Sangh is the biggest sangh and it has funds. It is pursuing the policy of decentralization. I am not unaware of its perils and its difficulties. We have to create a superior and more advanced type of khadi worker. Not till then, shall the Samaj Panchayat Raj become a reality. The workers of the Charkha Sangh are not there merely to earn a living for themselves, or merely to distribute some wages to the spinners, weavers, etc., by way of poor relief. The only goal worthy of their ambition must be to create a non-violent order of society. In this, they have not made much headway. If our khadi workers are there for wages only, then we had better bid good-bye to the dream of realizing a non-violent social order. The success will depend on our uttermost purity. Impatience would be fatal."

In conclusion, Gandhi said:

"Today, most of our workers are drawn from the cities. The really poor villager is haunted by the spectre of destitution. He cannot see

beyond the satisfaction of his primary needs. The villager does not understand non-violence, nor do I talk to him of it, but, I try only to see that he becomes a good spinner and he gets a fair, minimum subsistence wage. I do not mind, if the volume of our work is small, so long as it is solid. The constitution-making will be over in a few months. What next? The responsibility of working it and making of it a success will rest on you. Supposing you get a constitution after your heart, but it does not work. After five years, someone will say: 'You had your innings, now give us a chance.' You will then have to give in and they may try to seize power, set up a dictatorship and strangulate the Congress. *Per contra*, suppose you do not take power but you gain hold on the public, then you will be able to return at the polls, whomsoever you may wish. Forget membership, so long as the voters are in your hand. Think of the root and take care of it, as much as you can, make self-purification the sole criterion. Even a handful imbued with this spirit will be able to transform the atmosphere. The people will soon perceive the change and they will not be slow to respond to it. Yours is an uphill and difficult task, but it is full of rich promise."

Soon after the speech, there was a discussion.

Question: "The people are with us, but the Government obstruct our effort. What are we to do?"

Gandhi: "If people are with you, the Government are bound to respond. If they do not, they will be set aside and another installed in their place. Even in the days of Lord Wavell, I used to tell people that they did not know their own strength, or they could get Lord Wavell removed at will. When the British realized that they could rule over us only by martial law, they removed him. It is a tribute to them, for they could very well have imposed martial law."

Question: "Should there not be an over-all organization, which would include and co-ordinate all the sanghs' activities?"

Gandhi: "A separate organization is not necessary for that purpose. What is needed is the co-ordination of the work of the sanghs. The various sanghs have worked so far separately and independently of one another till now. We had tried to set up a co-ordinating committee for the purpose of Samagra Gram Seva, but it did not work. If we all unite, we shall function like the departments of the Central Government. The members of the Charkha Sangh will do the work of Gram Udyog too. There is the question of the sale of *tad gur*. Why

should not the Charkha Sangh take it over? Our workers' children have to be educated. Shall we build a separate school for them? Is that not the function of the Talimi Sangh? If we will not co-operate even in such matters, it will show that we have not understood how ahimsa works. The central body will lay down the general lines of policy, which all the sanghs would follow. If we are determined and pledge ourselves to 'Do or Die', we are bound to succeed."

Aryanayakam: "Let the presidents and secretaries of the various sanghs meet first in a preliminary informal conference, and after discussion, place before Gandhiji the implications and the difficulties of unification."

Shankarrao Deo: "This is not the right way to go about it. The workers should meet first. A gathering of the presidents and the secretaries will not have the requisite atmosphere. This is a narrow and subjective approach."

Gandhi: "It is neither narrow, nor subjective. The workers' conference can follow, not precede. The Charkha Sangh has its board. Shri Jajuji must consult it first. The average worker will not even be able to understand."

Shankarrao Deo: "We have a number of intelligent constructive workers, let them be called."

Gandhi: "We seem now to be talking at cross purposes. The discussion that I have proposed, involves technical matters. It needs specialists. The general workers will feel themselves at sea, in such a discussion. Let the props and pillars unite. All will then feel the glow of strength. Forget me. Dr. Zakir Husain is a great organizer. He has suggested that nothing should be decided under the spell of my presence just now. And, therefore, he has recommended that the matter be taken up later at Sevagram. I am for it. The atmosphere there would be calmer and free from the communal virus. When I came here, I did know that I would have to speak on these things. I was told that, in the constitution committee of the Congress, there were some constructive workers; how could those workers make their influence felt in the Congress? I had come to tell you that you must not expect to get the constitution you desire, through the Congress. Nor need that worry you. It should be enough, if the constitution you get does not actually stand in the way of constructive effort. The second thing that I had come to tell you was that the various sanghs should now become the research laboratories in their respective fields.

Ourconstructive works institutions are not democracies, but they are the instruments for the building up of democracy. The Congress has lent us its name and its prestige and, in return, the Congress derives prestige from us for the service which, as its true servants, we render. The connection of the constructive works organizations with the Congress is spiritual. That connection can be severed, at any moment. As specialists, we should be able to tender to the Congress our advice, on what needs to be done."

Question: "Why cannot we get it done through the Congress?"

Gandhi: "Because the Congressmen are not sufficiently interested in constructive work. If they were, it should not have been necessary for us to meet here."

Question: "That being the Congress psychology, what is the use of giving place to the constructive works organizations in the Congress constitution?"

Gandhi: "Because the constitution moulds the psychology of the people. The people may not do the things they believe, but then, it should be our duty to see, that through our neglect our case does not go by default."

Question: "Labour is represented in the assembly through their representatives. There are also special seats reserved for the universities. Why should not the constructive workers' organizations have their functional representatives in the A.-I.C.C., who would act in the general way too?"

Gandhi: "No, not the mixture. Functional is all right. But in the general, there is so much of corruption today, that it frightens me. Everybody wants to carry so many votes in his pockets, because the votes give power. Under the adult suffrage, anybody who is eligible has a vote. Let all such members of the various sanghs form themselves into one body and let the Congress Working Committee and the A.-I.C.C. take from among them their nominees, to advise and to guide them in matters and policies, pertaining to the constructive work. There are so many labour organizations in the country. There is the Ahmedabad Labour Union, the Charkha Sangh, the Goseva Sangh, the Chamber of Commerce, and so on. The Congress claims to represent them all. The Congress, of course, claims to represent the princes too. But I would not advise you to include the Chamber of the Princes in your scheme. Take all the living organizations with you. Purify yourselves of all dross. Banish the very idea of capture of

power and keep it on the right path. Therein lies salvation. There is no other way."

In his prayer speech on New Year's Day, January 1, 1948, Gandhi expressed great pleasure at the large size of the prayer gathering, but regretted that seven minutes had to be lost in making the seating arrangements for women. Even one minute wasted by a meeting meant so many minutes lost to the nation. Men should learn to give place to women, and a community or country, in which women were not honoured, could not be considered civilized. Having attained independence, all of us should, from now on, behave as citizens of a free and proud country.

It was raining on the evening of January 2, when Gandhi arrived at the prayer ground, wearing his Noakhali hat, to the amusement of the audience. So he commenced his prayer speech with a humorous reference to his straw hat, which he valued both as a present from a Muslim kisan, and as a cheap substitute for an umbrella, all made of local material.

He then referred to a letter, recently received from Allahabad. According to the writer, barring only a few honourable exceptions, no Muslim could be trusted to remain loyal to the Indian Union, more specially in the event of an inter-dominion war, and the majority of Muslims in the Union, with the exception of a few nationalists should, therefore, be turned out. The speaker observed that it behoved man to trust the word of his fellow men, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary. Only last week, nearly one lakh of Muslims had met in Lucknow and made an unequivocal declaration of their nationalism. If a man was demonstrably disloyal or dishonest, he could even be shot, though that was not the speaker's way. But the needless distrust was a sign of ignorance and cowardice, and it had led to the communal hatred and bloodshed and migration on a colossal scale. Its continuance would only result in the perpetuation of the division of India and the eventual destruction of the two dominions. If the war broke out, which God forbid, he would not like to live, but if the people shared his faith in non-violence, there would be no war, and all would yet be well.

The next day, he said that people were talking everywhere about the possibility of a war between the two dominions. He was amazed to see that the Government of Pakistan disputed the veracity of the Union's representation to the U.N.O. and the charge that Pakistan

had a hand in the invasion of Kashmir by the raiders. Mere denials cut no ice. It was incumbent upon the Indian Union to go to the rescue of Kashmir, when the latter sought the Union's aid in expelling the raiders, and it was the duty of Pakistan to co-operate with the Union. But while Pakistan professed its willingness to co-operate, it took no concrete steps in that direction. He would like to impress on the leaders of Pakistan that the partition now having been conceded, there was no justification for animosity. Partition was demanded on religio-communal grounds, and it was, therefore, the duty of Pakistan, as its name implied, to remain clean in all its dealings. Both the Hindus and the Muslims had resorted to cruel acts and had made grievous blunders, but that did not mean that this mad race should go on, culminating in war. A war would bring both the dominions under the sway of a third power and nothing could be worse. He, therefore, pleaded for amity and goodwill, which could enable the Union's representation to the U.N.O. to be withdrawn with dignity. This the U.N.O. itself would welcome. He invited all to join in this prayer. The understanding should, however, be genuine. To harbour internal hatred might be even worse than war.

He next referred to an incident, which had occurred in Delhi, the previous night. A party of refugees had tried to effect unauthorized entry into vacant Muslim houses. The police arrived on the scene and they had to disperse the crowd with tear-gas. Today, we had our own Government. How could they function satisfactorily, if the public behaved lawlessly? What was worse, women and children were placed in front of the crowd, to evade the remedial action by the police. This amounted to an affront to womanhood, and cowardice on the part of men, possibly even worse than a similar use of the cows by the Muslims in bygone times in their fight with the Hindus. He again appealed to the refugees to maintain peace and order, particularly at the present time, when the relations between the Indian Union and Pakistan were strained, and thus help in the preservation of our new-born freedom.

The situation in India and Pakistan was tense. The refugee problem was heart-rending. Tempers ran high. Pakistan leaders made irresponsible statements. Sardar Patel warned : "If Pakistan does not change her ways, then there may soon be a flare-up. The nation must be quite ready for any emergency. Kashmir and Junagadh are small matters, and if the rulers of Pakistan want a trial of strength, India

is ready. As far as India is concerned, she wants Pakistan to grow into a strong and prosperous country." Some people, Sardar Patel added, had talked of a possible re-union of the two countries. But in fact, he declared, India did not desire a re-union just now, at least not until those who had clamoured for a separate homeland, had reaped the harvest they had sown. There was a time, he said, when Mahatma Gandhi was considered the greatest enemy of the Muslims. Today, things had reversed, and the Mahatma was regarded as their sole protector and benefactor. Gandhiji had gained his unpopularity by frankly stating what he felt and foresaw. The Muslims refused to see hard facts. They thought that with the establishment of Pakistan their interests would be fully secure. But the present position showed, how ill-founded that hope was.

In his prayer speech on the 6th, Gandhi said that he had heard that several refugees were still trying to occupy the vacant Muslim houses and the police were using tear-gas to disperse the crowd. It was true that the refugees were faced with great hardship. It was hard to lie in the open, in the biting cold of Delhi. When it rained, the tents were not sufficient protection. He would understand the refugees clamouring for the houses, if they would not make the Muslim houses their target. For instance, they could come to the Birla House and turn him and the owners, including a sick lady, out and occupy the house. That would be open dealing, though not gentlemanly. The squeezing out of the Muslims, that was going on, was crooked and ungentlemanly. To scare away the already frightened Muslims and then to occupy their houses, would not be good for anybody. He had heard that, that day, the authorities had offered some housing accommodation to the refugees elsewhere, but they insisted on occupying the Muslim houses. This was a clear indication, that it was not the necessity which was the driving force, but the wish to get Delhi cleared of the Muslims. If such was the general wish, then it would be much better to tell the Muslims to go, instead of driving them away indirectly. They should understand the consequences of such a step in the capital of the Union.

In his prayer address on the 7th, Gandhi referred to the visit of several representatives of the refugees from Pakistan. They asked him, why he did not take more interest in the removal of their grievances. Little did they realize that he was in Delhi for that very purpose. But he was not so effective today, as he used to be, before the advent

of India's independence. In the past, he was the leader of the non-violent rebels. Although everyone did not follow his advice, a large number did so. Today, his was a voice in the wilderness. The great teachers had said that one should go on proclaiming the truth, as one saw it, even though no one listened to it. He was not running the Government. Those at the helm of the affairs, it was true, were his friends. But he did not want anyone to accept his advice, out of regard or friendship for him. They should do so, only if it went home. If the ministers and their secretaries and the lower staff, including the police, would listen to him, things then would be very different. But that could not be. The ministers had inherited the old machinery from the British rulers and they were making the best of it.

The refugees were, however, entitled to shelter, food and clothing. They were their own kith and kin. It was utterly unjust that they should not get what, for instance, he could. What were the refugees to do? He had told them already that the only course was for all to gratefully accept whatever accommodation was offered. The grass mattress could very well serve the purpose of the cotton mattress. For the food and clothing and shelter supplied to them, they should do such work, as was entrusted to them. A labourer could not sit at the table and write, but a man who had worked at the table all his life could certainly take to physical labour. If they developed the right mentality, India could easily absorb the few lakhs of refugees that had come and more.

They all knew of the sad happenings in Karachi. Although, many people had said that Sind was quiet and the people could continue to stay there, he had his doubts. His fears had come true. Not only the Hindus and the Sikhs, but the other non-Muslims also were not safe in Sind today. The Government of Pakistan had admitted that they had been powerless to prevent the disturbances, but they were trying to suppress them, as fast as they could. His advice both to the Pakistan Government and to the Union Government was that, if they were powerless to prevent the outbreak of violence, then they should resign. That might make the things worse for a while, but ultimately, they would improve. The only condition on which they should continue to hold the reins was that things should begin to improve, however slowly. There should be no setback.

To the refugees and the Hindus and the Sikhs, in general, he would advise that they must curb their desire for revenge. They should be

neither frightened, nor become upset and panicky by the happenings in Karachi. The only correct reply to such a thing was cent per cent correct behaviour in the Union.

Before the prayers started on January 8, several slips were passed to Gandhi by the members of the audience. One of them had asked him, why he did not go to Pakistan. He replied that he had already told them that he could not do so, till the things were perfectly all right in the Indian Union. As to another question, he replied that it was in their hands to enable him to go to Pakistan. He would want to go there, when Delhi showed a clean slate. The same friend had also contended that if satyagraha was a potent remedy for all ills, why it should not be tried in Pakistan. The speaker agreed that if the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan could resort to satyagraha, it would prove efficacious for all their troubles there. But where was that satyagraha today? He saw no satyagraha anywhere in India, on any appreciable scale. Everywhere, people wanted the police and the military for their protection. We seemed to have displaced God and preferred the military.

The same friend had stated further that Pakistan was determined to drive away all the Hindus and Sikhs, unless they remained there as serfs. Therefore, the writer asked that, unless all the Muslims, or at least an even number left the Union, how could the non-Muslim new-comers be accommodated? The speaker replied that an even number of Muslims had probably already left the Union. But there were large numbers of Muslims in the Union still. Seventy thousand of Muslims, had collected at the conference called by the Maulana Saheb. They were the representatives of the Union Muslims. Were these Muslims to be driven away or exterminated? The speaker could never be a party to that. There was no bravery in such a course of action. Whatever the others might do, he did not want the Union to become communal in its outlook. One should copy the good in others, never the evil.

In his address on the 9th, Gandhi said that a friend had written to him that many poor people could not come to attend his prayers on the Birla House grounds. He had asked why the speaker was not staying at the Bhangi Colony, as before. He had given the reason on his arrival at Delhi. But he would repeat it. When he arrived in Delhi, Delhi was like a dead city. The riot had just broken out and the Bhangi Colony was full of refugees. The Sardar, therefore, had

decided to put him at the Birla House instead. The speaker did not know, if the Bhangi Colony was vacant now. Even if it was, he did not think it would be right for him to shift there. His main object in staying in Delhi, was to give to the Muslims whatever comfort and aid he could. And that object was served better, by his staying at the Birla House. The Muslim friends felt safer in coming here, than in the poor quarters of Delhi. Moreover, it was much easier for the members of the Cabinet to come to see him at the Birla House, as most of them were staying close by. They were all very busy men, and going to the Bhangi Colony would require much more time, than coming to the Birla House.

Gandhi appealed to the people to maintain peace in the capital. He had heard that there were many thieves and thugs, who went about Delhi, dressed as gentlemen. Such a state of affairs should be remedied, without delay.

As Gandhi walked to the prayer ground on January 10th, the refugees from Bahawalpur staged a demonstration and shouted angry slogans, asking for help for the 70,000 Hindus and Sikhs left behind in Bahawalpur. But the demonstrators became perfectly quiet, when he sat down for the prayers. He commended their example to all. He had been told that the people from Bahawalpur would disturb the prayer meeting that day. He had not believed it and according to his expectation, they had maintained perfect silence during the prayers. It pleased him to note, how peaceful the prayer gathering these days were. The sufferers from Bahawalpur had given expression to their anguish in a restrained manner. He knew their sufferings. He assured them that everything possible was being done for the Hindus and the Sikhs of Bahawalpur. He had the word of the ruler that though he could not bring the dead back to life, the remaining Hindus and Sikhs could live there in peace and in safety. No one would interfere with their religion. The Union Government was also alive to their duty and were doing all that was possible. He wanted them to bear in mind that there was a far larger number of Hindus and Sikhs in Sind, including a large number of Harijans. They did not feel safe there. He had just read a telegram from Sind saying that what had taken place in Karachi, was far worse than the newspaper reports led one to believe. His advice to them all was not to lose patience and courage. They should never accept defeat. The word "defeat" should be deleted from their dictionary. And for

that it was necessary that they should curb their anger and patiently think out their duty under the circumstances. He had been explaining it to them every day.

He then told the prayer audience that the Ambassador of Persia had been to see him that day. The ambassador said that India and Persia had been very old friends, and that they were from the same Aryan stock. India, he then added, was the biggest power in Asia and they felt great in India's greatness. The ambassador wanted Persia and India to be bound in ties of genuine friendship, and he was very anxious that the relations between India and Persia should not become strained in any manner. The speaker asked him what made him think of such a possibility. Then the ambassador told him that some Iranis had been molested and even killed in Bombay. People had gone mad. In the frenzy of the moment, some people might have injured some of the Iranis too as Muslims. But the ambassador had assured him that the Bombay Government had taken prompt action to put down the trouble. He was satisfied with the attitude of the provincial, as well as of the Central Government. On behalf of his own Government, he assured India that although there were some people who wanted trouble, in view of the exaggerated reports of the happenings in India, the Persian Government was watchful and did not wish to lose India's friendship on any account. He said that the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh traders in Persia were living in perfect peace and amity, so far.

Lastly, Gandhi referred to a friend's letter, saying that, although many people had congratulated him on removal of the controls, the measure was not an unmixed blessing. The speaker advised him to share his thoughts with the people. After all, his eyes, ears and hands were the people. He had to rely on what they told him. Therefore, he could not ignore large numbers of letters and telegrams, welcoming removal of the controls. He did not believe that they were all inspired by selfish motives. However, he wanted to know the other side too. He advised the people not to take anything for granted, because he advocated it. If their own experience told them otherwise, then they should stick to their own judgement, in defiance of twenty mahatmas. Then alone will they be able to make good the independence—if one could call it by that name—that had come to India.

On January 11th, Gandhi referred to a letter from Andhra and he gave the following relevant extracts from it:

"I intensely hate to point out the shortcomings of an individual, but to shut one's eyes to the terrible consequences of the rot set in the individuals of an organization like the Congress, noble in its origin and admirable in its achievements, would be heinous. This rot in the Congress is that of the peoples' representatives in the legislative bodies of the provinces, who are the prototype of the rank and file. They are vociferous about stopping the widespread corruption, but they themselves resort to worse corruption. They accept money from the people to secure licences of every description, indulge in black-marketing of the worst type, trade on the ignorance of the masses, and corrupt the sources of justice, and force the administrative machinery to get transfers for the administrative personnel. The people are crushed between these two sets of people. Two hundred and fifty of these legislators let loose on the people in a province without opposition, are, in my opinion, the worse plague. Is it after all for replacing the white rapacity by the black that so many noble souls, who are no more with us, suffered and sacrified everything worth living for in their lives? There must be an escape out of this morass. If these legislators are not so numerous, the evils would be less. Fifty members in the lower house and half that number in the upper house, for each province, which is going to be smaller on the linguistic basis, would minimize the nuisance. Will the constitutionalists embody this principle of less the number the better in the constitution of our country and save us from the rapacious legislators and incidentally from top-heavy expenditure?"

Gandhi had received a confirmatory letter from an old and aged friend from Andhra. He appealed to all, whether Congressmen or socialists or communists, to live and work for the good of India. If they all ran after power, where then would India be? They should think of the interests of the country, rather than their own, or of those of their friends.

Lastly, he mentioned the visit from some Muslim friends. They asked him how long they were to put up with pin-pricks. If the Congress could not protect them, they should say so in plain language, so that the Muslims might go away and be spared the daily insults and possible physical violence. Those Muslim friends were speaking for the Delhi Muslims in general. He admonished them to hold their place. He wanted all the nationalists not to mix religion with politics. They were Indians first and last, in all secular matters. Religion was a

personal affair of the individual concerned. Times were very hard. In Pakistan, the Muslims had gone mad and they had driven away most of the Hindus and the Sikhs. If the Hindus in the Indian Union did likewise, they would certainly spell their own ruin. To try to suppress another was always suicidal. All right-thinking men should work against this tendency.

On January 11, under "Urdu *Harijan*", Gandhi wrote:

"Two weeks ago, I hinted in the Gujarati columns that the *Harijan*, printed in the Urdu script, was likely to be stopped, as its sale was steadily dwindling. Apart even from financial considerations, I saw no meaning in publishing it, if there was no demand for it. The dwindle to me was a sign of resentment against its publication. I would be foolish, if I failed to profit by it.

"My view remains unalterable, especially at this critical juncture in our history. It is wrong to ruffle Muslim or any other person's feeling, when there is no question of ethics. Those who take the trouble of learning the Urdu script in addition to the Nagari, will certainly lose nothing. They will gain a knowledge of the Urdu script, which many of our countrymen know. If it were not for cussedness, this proposition will be admitted without any argument. The limitations of this script in terms of perfection are many. But, for elegance and grace, it will equal any script in the world. It will not die, so long, at least, as Arabic and Persian live, though it has achieved a status all its own without outside aid. With a little adaptation, it can serve the purpose of shorthand. As a national script, if it is set free from the bondage of orthodoxy, it is capable of improvement, so as to enable one to transcribe Sanskrit verses without the slightest difficulty.

"Lastly, those who in anger boycott the Urdu script, put a wanton affront upon the Muslims of the Indian Union who, in the eyes of many Hindus, have become aliens in their own land. This is copying the bad manners of Pakistan, with a vengeance. I invite every inhabitant of India to join me in a stern refusal to copy bad manners. If they will enter the heart of what I have written, they will prevent the impending collapse of the Nagari and Urdu editions of *Harijan*. Will the Muslim friends rise to the occasion and do two things: subscribe to the Urdu edition and diligently learn the Nagari script and enrich their intellectual capital?"

One correspondent wrote: "I could have understood your step, if the Nagari and the Urdu editions of the *Harijan* had been started for

the sole purpose of propagating Hindustani. But the Nagari edition was being published from the commencement, with a different end. If it was not self-supporting, then you would be justified in stopping it. But I see an element of coercion in its threatened closure. Is the Nagari *Harijansevak* a greater evil, than even the English *Harijan*? The proper course would be to stop the publication of the English edition first, and not that the English edition should get—as it does at present—greater importance than the Indian languages editions. How painful it is that though your post-prayer speeches are given in Hindustani, your office summarizes them in English and translations of the English summaries are published in the Indian languages editions of the *Harijan*. It appears that this practice has been put an end to recently. Some years ago, you declared that, as far as possible, you would write your original articles in Gujarati or Hindustani and the English edition would give only translations. This was done for some time, but the old habit seems to have reasserted itself. I request you to stop the English edition and to publish the Indian languages editions only." Gandhi wrote in reply:

"If one says what is just the truth, it is a wrong use of the word 'anger' to say that it is done in anger. Anger is followed by an unbalanced action. If the Urdu edition has to be stopped, the stopping of the Nagari edition becomes inevitable. There can be no anger in doing a thing which is inevitable. Of course, I cannot help, if others like the correspondent, do not agree with me that it is compulsory for me to stop the Nagari edition, if I cannot publish the Urdu edition. There are always two sides to every question, and much though one might wish, it is not possible to have unanimity of opinion in this world.

"Let me now explain why I should stop both the editions and not only one. It is true that when the Nagari *Navajivan* and the Nagari *Harijansevak* began their publications, there was no dispute about the two scripts. If there was, I, at least, don't know it.

"In the meantime, the Hindustani Prachar Sabha was founded at the suggestion of the late Sheth Jamnalal Bajaj. This rendered the issue of the Urdu edition absolutely necessary. Now, if I were to stop the Urdu edition and continue the Nagari edition only, it would be, in my own eyes, a highly improper act. For, according to the Hindustani Prachar Sabha, Hindustani means a language which may be written in both the scripts equally.

"Consequently, paper published in both the scripts, should continue in both. This becomes all the more necessary, when the people clamour on all sides that the national language of India should be Hindi and that it should be written in the Nagari script only. It is my duty to show that this claim or demand is not right. If my reasoning is correct, a further duty devolves on me that I should either publish *Harijansevak* in both the scripts, or stop both the editions.

"I accept that among all the scripts, the Nagari script stands first in merit. I do not give out anything new in this. I had come to this opinion, even when I was in South Africa, where I had actually begun to write the Gujarati letters in the Nagari script. For want of time, I could not pursue this subject to the end. No doubt, there is room for reform in the Nagari script, even as there is in the other scripts. But this is altogether a different matter. I refer to this merely to show that there is not the least disaffection towards Nagari in my mind. But when the lovers of the Nagari script oppose the Urdu script, I scent in it hatred and intolerance. The opponents have not even the confidence that, since the Nagari script is more perfect than the other scripts, it must ultimately prevail. If they looked at it from this point of view, they would regard my decision to be correct and also inevitable.

"I am, undoubtedly, an advocate of Hindustani. I believe that between the Nagari and Urdu scripts, Nagari will prevail ultimately. But if we leave aside the script and consider only the language, then I say that Hindustani will win in the end, as the Sanskritized Hindi is entirely artificial, while Hindustani is quite natural. In the same way, the Persianized Urdu is artificial and unnatural. There are not many Persian words in my Hindustani. I find very little argument in favour of Hindi. It is significant that, when I gave my first definition of Hindi in the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, there was very little opposition to it. I would not like to remember, far less to relate, the sorrowful history of how that opposition began. I had gone to the length of saying that the name Hindi Sahitya Sammelan was not proper for propagating the national language. I adhere to the opinion then expressed.

"But, I had not accepted the presidentship of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, as a Hindi man of letters. Shri Jamnalal Bajaj and the other friends represented to me that whatever be the name, they did not take interest in the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan as literary men,

but as promoters of the national language. It was this which made me work energetically for the propagation of the national language in South India.

"I am not the least interested in the controversy about the name. The name may be any, provided whatever we do is for the good of the country and the nation. There should be no opposition to any name as such.

"Which Indian heart will not throb on hearing Iqbal's 'Hindostan Hamara'? If there is one, I should consider it to be a misfortune. Is the language of this song of Iqbal, Hindi or Hindustani or Urdu? Who will say that this is not the national language of India, that the language is not sweet, or that it does not express highest thought? To conclude, even if I were alone to say so, I am quite clear that, ultimately, neither the Sanskritized Hindi, nor the Persianized Urdu will win the race; Hindustani alone can do so. Only when we have given up our internal quarrels, shall we forget these artificial controversies and feel ashamed of having created them.

"And now about the *Harijan* in English. I consider it to be comparatively a minor point. I cannot stop the English edition for the reason that Englishmen, as well as the Indian scholars of the English language, consider me to be a good writer in the English language. My relations with the West are also increasing every day. I never hated before and do not hate today Englishmen or other westerners. I wish them good, as much as I wish good to my countrymen. And so, I cannot cast out the English language from my small store of knowledge. I do not wish to forget that language, nor do I wish all the Indians to give up or forget it. What I have always insisted upon is that it should not go out of its proper place. It can never become the national language of India, or a medium of Indian education. By doing this, we have impoverished our own languages and have put a great strain upon our students. So far as I know, this tragedy has taken place in India only. Our slavery to the English language, has kept millions of our people deprived of useful knowledge for years. My regret is that we do not understand this, are not ashamed of it and do not repent it. It is a tragedy. But with all this clear to me, I cannot boycott the English language. Even as Tamil, etc., are the languages of the different provinces, and Hindustani is the national language of the country, so is English, the language of the world. Its international position cannot be disputed. The imperialist rule of the

Englishman will go, because it was and is an evil. But the superior role of the English language cannot go.

"I do believe that the English *Harijan* and the Gujarati *Harijanbandhu* will stand on their own legs for whatever I may publish in those languages."

In an article entitled "How Democracy Works", Gandhi wrote:

"A valued correspondent has written to me two letters, one issuing a timely warning about the ill effects of hasty decontrol and the other about the possibility of an outbreak of the Hindu-Muslim riots. I have dealt with both the letters in a letter, which has become unexpectedly argumentative and gives my view of democracy, which can only come out of non-violent mass action. I, therefore, reproduce the letter below, without giving, at the same time, those letters, to which it is in answer. There is enough in the answer to enable the reader to know the purport of the two letters. I have purposely refrained from giving the name of my correspondent and the scene of action, not because the letters are confidential, but because nothing is to be gained from disclosing either:

" 'You still write, as if you had a slave mind, though the slavery of us all is abolished. If decontrol has produced the effect that you attribute to it, you should raise your voice, even though you may be alone in doing so and your voice may be feeble. As a matter of fact you have many companions and your voice is by no means feeble, unless intoxication of power has enfeebled it. Personally, the bogy of the shooting up of prices, by reason of decontrol, does not frighten me. If we have many sharks and we do not know how to combat them, we shall deserve to be eaten up by them. Then we shall know how to carry ourselves in the teeth of adversity. The real democracy people learn not from the books, not from the government who are in name and in reality their servants. Hard experience is the most efficient teacher in democracy. The days of appeals to me are gone. The cloak of non-violence which we had put on during the British regime, is no longer now necessary. Therefore, violence faces us in its terrible nakedness. Have you also succumbed, or you too never had non-violence? This letter is not to warn you against writing to me and giving me your view of the picture, but is intended to tell you why I would swear by decontrol, even if mine was a solitary voice.

" 'Your second letter about the Hindu-Muslim tension is more to the point, than the first. Here too, you should raise your voice openly

against any soft handling of the situation, or any smug satisfaction. I shall do my part, but I am painfully conscious of my own limitations. Formerly, I could afford to be monarch of all I surveyed. Today, I have many fellow monarchs, if I may still count myself as such. If I can, I am the least among them. The first days of democracy are discordant notes, which jar on the ear, and give many headaches. If democracy is to live, in spite of these killing notes, sweet concord has to rise out of this seemingly discordant necessary lesson. How I wish that you would be one of the masters, who would contribute to the production of concord out of discord!

"'You will not make the mistake of thinking that your duty is finished, when you have apprised me of the situation in your part of the country.'"

"When it is relevant," he wrote, "Truth has to be uttered, however unpleasant it may be. Irrelevance is always untruth and should never be uttered. Misdeeds of the Hindus in the Indian Union have to be proclaimed by the Hindus from the house-top, if those of the Muslims in Pakistan are to be arrested or stopped. Confession of one's guilt purifies and uplifts. Its suppression is degrading and should always be avoided."

The Last Fast

1948

"We are steadily losing hold on Delhi," Gandhi said to a worker. "If Delhi goes, India goes and with that goes the last hope of world peace." It was intolerable to him that a man like Dr. Zakir Husain, for instance, or for that matter, Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy should not be able to move about in Delhi as freely and with as much safety, as himself. When a deputation of Muslims waited upon him, setting forth to him their grievances, he immediately arranged a meeting between them and important Cabinet members in his presence. He was equally concerned with the sufferings of the minority community in Pakistan. He would have liked to be able to go to their succour. But with what face could he go there, when he could not guarantee full redress to the Muslims in Delhi? He felt helpless and so came his decision to fast in a flash. It left no room for argument, so much so, that he gave no inkling to Nehru and Patel, who saw him only a couple of hours before the announcement of his fast.

In his prayer speech on the evening of January 12, 1948, Gandhi announced his decision to fast from the 13th, for an indeterminate period, to bring about a reunion of hearts of all communities:

"One fasts for health's sake, under laws governing health, fasts as a penance for a wrong done and felt as such. In these fasts, the fasting one need not believe in ahimsa. There is, however, a fast which a votary of non-violence sometimes feels impelled to undertake by way of protest against some wrong done by the society, and this he does when he, as a votary of ahimsa, has no other remedy left. Such an occasion has come my way.

"When on September 9, I returned to Delhi from Calcutta, it was to proceed to the West Punjab. But, that was not to be. Gay Delhi looked a city of the dead. As I alighted from the train, I observed gloom on every face I saw. Even the Sardar, whom humour and the joy that humour gives, never desert, was no exception this time. The

cause of it, I did not know. The Sardar was on the platform to receive me. He lost no time in giving me the sad news of the disturbances that had taken place in the metropolis of the Union. At once I saw that I had to be in Delhi, and 'do or die'. There is apparent calm brought about by the prompt military and police action. But there is storm within the breast. It may burst forth any day. This I count as no fulfilment of the vow to 'do', which alone can keep me from death, the incomparable friend. I yearn for heart friendship between the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims. It subsisted between them only the other day. But, today, it is non-existent. It is a state, that no Indian patriot worthy of the name, can contemplate with equanimity. Though the voice within has been beckoning for a long time, I have been shutting my ears to it, lest it may be the voice of Satan, otherwise called my weakness. I never like to feel resourceless, a satyagrahi never should. Fasting is a satyagrahi's last resort in the place of the sword—his or other's. I have no answer to return to the Muslim friends, who see me, from day to day, as to what they should do. My impotence has been gnawing at me of late. It will go, immediately the fast is undertaken. I have been brooding over it for the last three days. The final conclusion has flashed upon me, and that makes me happy. No man, if he is pure, has anything more precious to give than his life. I hope and pray that I have that purity in me to justify the step.

"I ask you all to bless the effort and to pray for me and with me. The fast begins from the first meal tomorrow. The period is indefinite and I may drink water with or without salt, and sour limes. It will end, when and if I am satisfied that there is a reunion of hearts of all communities brought about without any outside pressure, but from an awakened sense of duty. The reward will be the regaining of India's dwindling prestige and her fast fading sovereignty over the heart of Asia and, therethrough, the world. I flatter myself with the belief that the loss of her soul by India, will mean the loss of the hope of the aching, storm-tossed and hungry world. Let no friend, or foe, if there be one, be angry with me. There are friends who do not believe in the method of the fast for the reclamation of the human mind. They will bear with me and extend to me the same liberty of action, that they claim for themselves. With God as my supreme and sole counsellor, I felt that I must take the decision without any other adviser. If I have made a mistake and if I discover it, I shall have

no hesitation in proclaiming it from the house-top and retracing my faulty step. There is little chance of my making such a discovery. If there is clear indication, as I claim there is, of the inner voice, it will not be gainsaid. I plead for all absence of argument and inevitable endorsement of the step. If the whole of India responds, or at least Delhi does, the fast might be soon ended.

"But whether it ends soon or late, or never, let there be no softness in dealing with what may be termed as a crisis. The critics have regarded some of my previous fasts as coercive, and held that on pure merits the verdict would have gone against my stand, but for the pressure exercised by the fasts. What value can an adverse verdict have, when the purpose is demonstrably sound? A pure fast, like duty, is its own reward. I do not embark upon it for the sake of the result that it may bring. I do so, because I must. Hence, I urge everybody dispassionately to examine the purpose and let me die, if I must, in peace, which I hope, is ensured. Death for me would be a glorious deliverance, rather than that I should be a helpless witness of the destruction of India, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. That destruction is certain, if Pakistan ensures no equality of status and security of life and property for all professing the various faiths of the world and, if India copies her. Only then, Islam dies in the two Indias, not in the world. But, Hinduism and Sikhism have no world outside India. Those who differ from me, will be honoured by me for their resistance, however implacable. Let my fast quicken conscience, not deaden it. Just contemplate the rot that has set in in beloved India and you will rejoice to think that there is an humble son of hers who is strong enough and possibly pure enough, to take the happy step. If he is neither, he is a burden on earth. The sooner he disappears and clears the Indian atmosphere of the burden, the better for him and all concerned.

"I would beg of all friends not to rush to Birla House, nor try to dissuade me or be anxious for me. I am in God's hands. Rather, they should turn the searchlight inwards, for this is essentially a testing time for us all. Those who remain at their post of duty and perform it diligently and well, now more so than hitherto, will help me and the cause in every way. The fast is a process of self-purification.

"I told you yesterday of two letters from Andhra. One was from the aged friend, no other than Deshbhakta Konda Venkatappayya Garu. I give here extracts from it:

" 'The one great problem, apart from many other political and economic issues of very complicated nature, is the moral degradation into which the men in the Congress circles have fallen. I cannot say much about other provinces, but in my province, the conditions are very deplorable. The taste of political power has turned their heads. Several of the M.L.A.s and the M.L.C.s are following the policy of make-hay-while-the-sun-shines. Making money by the use of influence, even to the extent of obstructing the administration of justice in the criminal courts, presided over by magistrates. Even the district collectors and the other revenue officials do not feel free in the discharge of their duties on account of the frequent interference by the M.L.A.s and the M.L.C.s, on behalf of their partisans. A strict and honest officer cannot hold his position, for false reports are carried against him to the ministers, who easily lend their ears to these unprincipled self-seekers.

" 'Swaraj was the only all-absorbing passion, which had goaded men and women to follow your leadership. But now that the goal has been reached, all moral restrictions have lost their power on most of the fighters in the great struggle, who are joining hands even with those who were sworn opponents of the national movement and who now, for their personal ends, enlist themselves as Congress members. The situation is growing intolerable every day with the result that the Congress, as well as the Congress Government, have come into disrepute. The recent municipal elections in Andhra had proved how far and how fast the Congress is losing its hold upon the people. The municipal elections in Guntur were suddenly ordered to be stopped by an urgent message from the Minister for Local Bodies, Madras, after every preparation was made for carrying on the elections. Only a nominated council was in power for, I believe, the last ten years or more, and for nearly a year now, the municipal administration has been in the hands of a commissioner. Now the talk prevails that the Government would soon nominate councillors to take charge of the municipal affairs of this town. I, old and decrepit, with a broken leg, slowly limping on crutches within the walls of my house, have no axe to grind. I do, no doubt, entertain certain strong views against some of the provincial and district Congress committees that now stand divided. And I have made no secret of my views.

" 'The factions in the Congress circles, the money-making activities of several of the M.L.A.s and M.L.C.s, and the weakness of the

ministers have been creating a rebellious spirit amongst the people at large. The people have begun to say that the British Government was much better and they are even cursing the Congress.'

"Let the people of Andhra and the other provinces measure the words of this self-sacrificing servant of India. As he rightly observes that the corruption described by him, is no monopoly of Andhra. He could only give first-hand evidence about Andhra. Let us beware.

"My Bahawalpur friends I have asked to be patient. The Sardar Saheb saw me only at noon. Being silent and preoccupied, I could say or write nothing. Shri Shankar from his office was too busy to come, so that I could not place your case before him and possibly save the Sardar's precious time."

Gandhi began his fast at eleven on the morning of January 13th. Before entering on the fast, he went through his usual routine, looked into some important papers and received few visitors. Nehru, Patel and Azad had prolonged talks with him. The fast was preceded by a prayer on the lawns adjoining his room in the Birla House. A few friends and admirers, who included members of all the communities, clustered round the cot on which he was seated. "When I survey the Wondrous Cross" was sung, and it was followed by recitations from the Koran, Granth Saheb and Hindu devotional songs.

"I have a lot to say against your undertaking the present fast," wrote Devadas Gandhi. "My main concern and my argument against your fast is that you have at last surrendered to impatience, whereas the mission which you have undertaken is essentially one of infinite patience. You do not seem to have realized what a tremendous success you have achieved by your inexhaustible and patient labour. It has already saved lakhs upon lakhs of lives and could save many more still. But your patience seems to have suddenly snapped. By dying, you will not be able to realize what you would have realized by conserving your life. I would, therefore, beseech you to pay heed to my entreaty and give up your fast." Gandhi wrote in reply:

"I am not prepared to concede that my decision to undertake the present fast was hasty. It was quick, no doubt. The statement was of the nature of heart-searching and prayer. Therefore, it cannot be dubbed as 'hasty', in any sense of the term.

"I did not need to hear any arguments, as to the propriety of the fast. The fact that I did listen to any arguments, only bespeaks my patience and humility.

"Your worry, as well as your argument are of no use. You are, of course, my friend and a high-minded friend at that. Your concern is natural and I esteem it, but your argument only betrays impatience and superficial thinking. I regard this step of mine as the last word on patience. Would you regard patience that kills its very object, as patience or folly?

"I cannot take any credit for the results that have been achieved, since my coming to Delhi. And it would be self-delusion on my part to do so. Mere man cannot judge, as to how many lives were really saved by my labours. Only the Omniscient God can do that. Does it not betray sheer ignorance to attribute sudden loss of patience to one who has been as patience personified, right from the beginning of September last?

"It was only when, in terms of human effort, I had exhausted all resources and realized my utter helplessness, that I put my head on God's lap. That is the inner meaning and significance of my fast. If you read and ponder in your mind the epic of Gajendra Moksha, you might be able properly to appraise my step.

"The last sentence of your note is a charming token of your affection. But your affection is rooted in ignorance or infatuation. Ignorance does not cease to be ignorance, because of its repetition among persons, no matter how numerous they are.

"So long as we hug life and death, it is idle to claim that it must be preserved for a certain cause. 'Strive while you live' is a beautiful saying, but there is a hiatus in it. Striving has to be in the spirit of detachment.

"Now you will understand, why I can't accept your counsel. God sent me the fast. He alone will end it, if and when He wills. In the meantime, it behoves us all to believe that whether He preserves my life or ends it, it is equally to the good, and we should act accordingly. Let our sole prayer be that God may vouchsafe me strength of spirit during the fast, so that the temptation to live may not lead me into a hasty or premature termination of the fast."

Equally characteristic was his reply to a Sikh friend, who saw him soon after the commencement of the fast: "My fast is against no one party, group or individual exclusively, and yet it excludes nobody. It is addressed to the conscience of all, even the majority community in the other Dominion. If all or any one of the groups respond fully, I know that the miracle will be achieved. For instance, if the Sikhs

respond to my appeal as one man, I shall be wholly satisfied. I shall go and live in their midst in the Punjab, for they are a brave people and, I know, they can set an example in non-violence of the brave which will serve as an object lesson to all the rest."

On the 13th, Gandhi attended the evening prayers, as usual. He warned the audience against being surprised that he had walked to the prayer ground. A fast weakened nobody during the first twenty-four hours after a meal and it did good generally to everybody who fasted occasionally for twenty-four hours.

The day following, he stated, it might be difficult for him to walk to the prayer ground. But if they were eager to attend the prayers all the same, they could come and the girls would recite the prayers with them, even though he was not present.

He then referred to his written message of Monday. In that, he had stated that Shri Shankar of Sardar Patel's department would not come to see him, because Shrimati Manibehn had said that he was busy. She informed him that there was some misunderstanding. She had only said that Shri Shankar could not come at two p.m., but he could at some other time. The speaker was sorry that he did not correctly catch the message, or forgot it. He had not taken it amiss that Shri Shanker was busy the whole day. He would not expect the government servants to go to private persons. As it was, Shri Shankar was ready to oblige him another time. He mentioned this incident only to console the Bahawalpur refugees.

A question was asked, as to whom the speaker considered blame-worthy for the fast. He blamed no individual or community. He did believe, however, that if the Hindus and the Sikhs insisted on turning out the Muslims from Delhi, they would be betraying India and their own faiths. And that hurt him.

Some people had also taunted him that he had sympathy for the Muslims only and that he had undertaken this fast for their sake. They were right. But all his life, he had stood, as everyone should stand, for the minorities, or those in need. Pakistan had resulted in depriving the Muslims of the Union of pride and self-confidence. It hurt him to think that this was so. It weakened a state which kept or allowed any class of people who had lost self-confidence. His fast was against the Muslims too, in the sense that it should enable them to stand up to their Hindu and Sikh brethren. In terms of the fast Muslim friends had to work no less than the Hindus and the Sikhs.

Thus, they were in the habit of singling out Pandit Nehru and him for praise and, by contrast, blaming Sardar Patel. Some twitted the Sardar for his remark that the Muslim Leaguers could not become friends overnight. They should not blame the Sardar, as he did not, for the remark. Most of the Hindus held similar view. What the speaker wanted his Muslim League friends to do was to live down the Sardar's remark and by their conduct—not by declarations—disprove it. Let it be remembered that Panditji, though he had not the same method and manner as the Sardar, claimed him as his valued colleague. If the Sardar was an enemy of the Muslims, Panditji could ask him to retire. The Sardar had not ceased to be the speaker's esteemed friend, though he was no longer his "yes-man", as he was once popularly and affectionately nicknamed. The friends should also know the true character of the Cabinet. It was responsible for every official act of every member of the Cabinet. He expected a thorough cleansing of hearts. That being assured, there would be mutual respect and trust. They were all of the Union and by right it belonged to them. He could not break the fast for less. They must dethrone Satan from their hearts and enthrone God.

What was the duty of the Hindus and Sikhs? They had just heard Gurudev's favourite song: "If no one responds to your call, walk alone, walk alone." He liked it very much; it was often sung during his walking pilgrimage in Noakhali. He would repeat with his last breath that the Hindus and the Sikhs should be brave enough to say that, whatever happened in Pakistan, they would not raise their little finger against a single Muslim in the Union. They would never again indulge in cowardly acts, however great the provocation.

If Delhi became peaceful in the real sense of the term, he would then break the fast. Delhi was the capital of the Union. The ruin or downfall of Delhi, he would regard as the ruin of India and Pakistan. He wanted Delhi to be safe for all Muslims, even for one like Shaheed Suhrawardy, who was looked upon as the chief of goondas. Let all proved goondas be rounded up. But, he was witness to the fact that Shaheed Saheb had worked for peace in Calcutta in all sincerity. He had pulled out the Muslims from the Hindu houses which they had forcibly occupied. He was living with him and he would willingly join the prayer, but the speaker would not expose him to the risk of being insulted. He wanted him, as he did every Muslim to feel as safe in Delhi, as the tallest of them.

He did not mind how long it took for real peace to be established. Whether it took one day or one month, it was immaterial. No one should say or do anything, to lure him into giving up his fast prematurely. The object should not be to save his life. It should be to save India and her honour. He would feel happy and proud, when he saw that India's place was not lowered, as it had become by the recent happenings, which he had no wish to recall.

On the 14th, Gandhi dictated articles for *Harijan*. Addressing the people of Gujarat, he wrote:

"I am dictating this from my bed, early on Wednesday morning. It is the second day of the fast, though twenty-four hours have not been completed, since the fast commenced. It is the last day of posting for this week's *Harijan*. Hence, I have decided to address a few words in Gujarati to the people of Gujarat.

"I do not regard this fast, as an ordinary fast. I have undertaken it after deep thought, and yet it has sprung not from reasoning but God's will that rules men's reason. It is addressed to no particular section or no individual, and yet, it is addressed equally to all. There is no trace of anger of any kind behind it, nor the slightest tinge of impatience. But behind it is the realization, that there is a time for everything and an opportunity, once missed, never returns. Therefore, the only thing that now remains is for every Indian to think, as to what his or her duty in the present hour is. The Gujaratis are Indians. So, whatever I write in Gujarati is addressed equally to all the people of India.

"Delhi is the metropolis of India. If, therefore, we really in our hearts do not subscribe to the two-nation theory, or in other words, if we do not regard the Hindus and the Muslims as constituting two distinct nations, we shall have to admit that the picture that the city of Delhi presents today, is not what we have envisaged always of the capital of India. Delhi is the Eternal City, as the ruins of its forerunners, namely, Indraprastha and Hastinapur testify. It is the heart of India. Only a nitwit can regard it as belonging to the Hindus or to the Sikhs only. It may sound very harsh, but it is the literal truth. From Cape Comorin to Kashmir and from Karachi to Dibrugarh in Assam, all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews, who people this vast sub-continent and who have adopted it as their dear motherland, have an equal right to it. No one has a right to say that it belongs to the majority community only, and that the minority

community can only remain there as the under dog. Whoever serves it with the purest devotion, must have the first claim. Therefore, anyone who wants to drive out of Delhi all Muslims, as such, must be set down as its enemy number one and, therefore, enemy number one of India. We are rushing towards that catastrophe. It is the bounden duty of every son and daughter of India to take his or her full share in averting it.

"What should we do then? If we would see our dream of panchayat raj, that is, true democracy, realized, we would regard the humblest and the lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. This presupposes that all are pure, or will become pure, if they are not. And purity must go hand in hand with wisdom. No one would then harbour any distinction between community and community, or caste and outcaste. Everybody would regard all as equal with oneself and would hold them together in the silken net of love. No one would regard another as an untouchable. We would hold as equal the toiling labourer and the rich capitalist. Everybody would know how to earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow and make no distinction between intellectual and physical labour. To hasten this consummation, we would voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. No one, who has wisdom, will ever touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. Everybody would observe swadeshi as the rule of life and regard every woman, not being his wife, as his mother or sister or daughter, according to her age, never lust after her in his heart. He would be ready to lay down his life, when the occasion demands it, and never want to take another's life. If he is a Sikh, in terms of the commandment of the gurus, he would have the heroic courage to stand singlehanded and alone—without yielding an inch of ground—against one lakh and a quarter, enjoined by them. Needless to say, such a son of India, will not want to be told what his duty in the present hour is."

On the 14th, Gandhi had dictated a message to be read out to the prayer audience, but later on he decided to go to the meeting and to address the gathering. He said that he had come, in spite of the doctor's objections. But from the next day, he would probably not be able to walk to the prayer ground. He had the strength that day and he used it, though the doctors had advised him to conserve it. He was in God's hands. If God wanted him to live, he would not die. He did not want his faith in God to weaken.

Continuing his discourse without referring to the dictated notes, Gandhi said:

"Cablegrams and telegrams are pouring in from far and near, and some of them, in my opinion, weighty and congratulating me on my resolve and entrusting me to God. Some others, in the friendliest terms appealing to me to abandon the fast and assuring me that they would befriend their neighbours, irrespective of caste and creed and try to carry out the spirit of my message that accompanied the fast. I am asking Shri Pyarelalji to give a few selections, from the abundance which is hourly increasing, to the press. They are from the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others. If those who have given me assurances—some of the senders represent associations and groups—carry them out faithfully, they will certainly have contributed largely to the hastening of the stoppage of the fast. Shrimati Mridulabehn asks the following question from Lahore, where she is now in touch with the Pakistan authorities, as also the common Muslims: 'There are friends here who are very anxious about Gandhiji's health and are eager to know what Gandhiji would like them to do on this side, and what he expects from his Muslim friends in Pakistan, including those who are in political parties and in Government service.' It is pleasing to think that there are Muslim friends who are anxious about my health, and more so to know that they are eager for the information that Shrimati Mridulabehn seeks. To all senders of the messages and to the seekers in Lahore, I wish to say that the fast is a process of self-purification and is intended to invite all who are in sympathy with the mission of the fast themselves to take part in the process of self-purification, whether they are in the service of Pakistan Government, or whether they are members of political parties, or others.

"You have heard of the cowardly attack on the Sikhs in Karachi. Innocent men, women and children were butchered and looted, and others have had to flee. Now comes the news of an attack on a refugee train at Gujrat. The train was carrying non-Muslim refugees from the Frontier Province. Large numbers are reported to have been killed and women abducted. It distresses me. How long can the Union put up with such things? How long can I bank upon the patience of the Hindus and Sikhs, in spite of my fast? Pakistan has to put a stop to this state of affairs. They must purify their hearts and pledge themselves that they will not rest, till the Hindus and the Sikhs can return and live in safety in Pakistan.

"Supposing that there is a wave of self-purification throughout India, Pakistan will become *pak*. It will be a state in which the past wrongs will have been forgotten, the past distinctions will have been buried, and the least and the smallest in Pakistan will command the same respect and the same protection of life and property that the Qaid-e-Azam enjoys. Such Pakistan can never die. Then and not till then, shall I repent that I ever called Pakistan a sin, as I am afraid I must hold today, it is. I want to live to see that Pakistan not on paper, not in the orations of the Pakistani orators, but in the daily life of every Pakistani Muslim. Then the inhabitants of the Indian Union will forget that there ever was any enmity between them and, if I am not mistaken, the Indian Union will proudly copy Pakistan and, if I am alive, I shall ask her to excel Pakistan in well-doing. The fast is a bid for nothing less. Be it said to the shame of those of us who are in the Indian Union, that we have readily copied Pakistani's bad manners.

"Before I ever knew anything about politics in my early youth, I dreamt the dream of communal unity of the heart. I shall jump in the evening of my life, like a child, to feel that the dream has been realized in this life. The wish for living the full span of life portrayed by the seers of old and which the seers permit us to set down at 125 years, will then revive. Who would not risk sacrificing his life for the realization of such a dream? Then we shall have the real swaraj. Then, though legally and geographically we may still be two states, in daily life, no one will think that we were two separate states. The vista before me seems to me to be, as it must be to you, too glorious to be true. Yet like a child in a famous picture, drawn by a famous painter, I shall not be happy, till I have got it. I live and I want to live, for no lesser goal. Let the seekers from Pakistan help me to come as near the goal, as it is humanly possible. A goal ceases to be one, when it is reached. But the nearest approach is always possible. What I have said holds good, irrespective of whether the others do it or not. It is open to every individual to purify himself or herself, so as to render him or her, fit for that land of promise. I remember to have read, I forget whether in the Delhi Fort or in the Agra Fort, when I visited them in 1896, a verse on one of the gates, which when translated reads thus: 'If there is paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here.' That fort with all its magnificence at its best, was no paradise in my estimation. But I should love to see that verse with

justice inscribed on the gates of Pakistan, at all the entrances. In such paradise, whether it is in the Union or in Pakistan, there will be neither paupers, nor beggars, nor high, nor low, neither millionaire employers, nor half-starved employees, nor intoxicating drinks or drugs. There will be the same respect for women, as vouchsafed to men, and the chastity and the purity of men and women will be jealously guarded. Where every woman, except one's wife, will be treated by men of all religions, as mother or sister or daughter, according to her age. Where there will be no untouchability, and where there will be equal respect for all faiths. They will be all proudly, joyously and voluntarily bread labourers. I hope that everyone who listens to me or reads these lines, will forgive me, if stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling the life-giving sunshine, I allow myself to indulge in this ecstasy. Let this assure the doubters and the sceptics that I have not the slightest desire that the fast should be ended, as quickly as possible. It matters little, if the ecstatic wishes of a fool like me are never realized, and the fast is never broken. I am content to wait, as long as it may be necessary, but it will hurt me to think that the people have acted merely in order to save me. I claim that God has inspired this fast and it will be broken only when and if He wishes it. No human agency has ever been known to thwart, nor will it ever thwart Divine Will."

A health bulletin issued on January 15th stated that Gandhi was considerably weak. His voice was feeble and the acetone bodies had appeared in the urine. Anxiety deepened. There were peace rallies in Delhi and elsewhere.

"The loss of Mahatma Gandhi's life would mean the loss of India's soul," said Nehru, addressing a meeting in Delhi. He appealed to his countrymen to maintain communal harmony and save Gandhi's life. He announced that beside other relief measures, the Government would arrange for the accommodation of every refugee in Delhi within the next one week.

Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Pakistan's Refugee Minister, declared that Gandhi's fast should serve as an eye-opener to people, not only in India, but also in Pakistan, and make them aware of the shame which they had brought upon themselves. He then suggested that the occasion indicated the need of a joint conference of the leaders of India and Pakistan and a bold and honest attempt to remove all the causes of friction.

Gandhi was too weak to walk to the prayer ground on the evening of the 15th. He, however, wanted to say a few words to the audience from his bed. The radio microphone was arranged near his bed, but as there was no loud speaker arrangement, his voice could not reach the prayer audience. A Hindi translation of his dictated message was read after the prayers.

In his spoken message at the radio microphone, he expressed regret that his voice could not reach the prayer audience. However, he would like to address a few words to the invisible audience, sitting in their homes, as he knew that it would comfort them to hear his voice, although if he had known that his voice would not reach the prayer audience, he would not have spoken. He had dictated a message for the prayer gathering that day. He did not know whether he would be fit enough to do so the next day.

He appealed to the people not to bother as to what the others were doing. Each one of them should turn the searchlight inwards, and purify his or her heart, as far as possible. He was convinced that if the people sufficiently purified themselves, they would help India and help themselves and also shorten the period of his fast. None should be anxious for him. They should think out, how best they could improve themselves and work for the good of the country. All must die some day. No one could escape death. Then why be afraid of it? In fact, death was a friend, which brought deliverance from sufferings.

In his dictated message, Gandhi said:

"The newspapermen sent me a message two hours after my prayer speech of last evening, asking to see me, as they had some doubts to be cleared. After a heavy day's work, I felt disinclined, out of some exhaustion, to see them for discussion. I, therefore, told Pyarelal to inform them to excuse me and further tell them that they should put down the questions in writing and send them to me next morning. They did so. This is the first question: 'Why have you undertaken the fast, when there was no disturbance of any kind in any part of the Indian Dominion?'

"What was it, if it was not a disturbing disturbance, for a crowd to make an organized and a determined effort to take forcible possession of Muslim houses? The disturbance was such, that the police had reluctantly to resort to tear-gas and even to a little shooting, if only overhead, before the unruly crowd dispersed. It would have been foolish for me to wait, till the last Muslim had been turned out of

Delhi by subtle undemonstrative methods, which I would describe as killing by inches.

"The second question is: 'You have said that you could not give any answer to the Muslims, who came to you with their tale of fear and insecurity and who have complained that Sardar Patel, who is in charge of the Home Affairs, is anti-Muslim. You have also stated that Sardar Patel is no longer a yes-man, as he used to be. All these factors create the impression that the fast is more intended to bring about a change of heart in Sardar Patel and thereby amounts to a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. It would be helpful, if you can clear the position.'

"As to this, I feel that my reply was quite precise, not admitting of more interpretations than one. The suggested interpretation never crossed my mind. If I had known that my statement could bear any such interpretation, I should surely have dispelled the doubt in anticipation. Many Muslim friends had complained of the Sardar's so-called anti-Muslim attitude. I had, with a degree of suppressed pain, listened to them, without giving any explanation. The fast freed me from this self-imposed restraint and I was able to assure the critics that they were wrong in isolating the Sardar from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and me, whom they gratuitously raise to the sky. This isolation did them no good. The Sardar had a bluntness of speech which sometimes unintentionally hurt, though the Sardar's heart was expansive enough to accommodate all. Thus, my statement was meant deliberately to free a lifelong and faithful comrade from any unworthy reproach. And lest my hearers should go away with the idea that my compliment carried the meaning that I could treat the Sardar as my yes-man, as he was affectionately described, I balanced the compliment by adding the proviso that he was too masterful to be anybody's yes-man. When he was my yes-man, he permitted himself to be so named, because whatever I said instinctively appealed to him. Great as he was in his own field and a very able administrator, he was humble enough to begin his political education under me, because, as he had explained to me, he could not take to the politics in vogue at the time when I began my public career in India. When power descended on him, he saw that he could no longer successfully apply the method of non-violence, which he used to wield with signal success. I have made the discovery that what I and the people with me had termed non-violence was not the genuine article, but

a weak copy known as passive resistance. Naturally, passive resistance can avail nothing to a ruler. Imagine a weak ruler being able to represent any people. He would only degrade his masters who, for the time being, had placed themselves under his trust. I know that the Sardar could never betray, or degrade his trust.

"I wonder if, with the knowledge of this background to my statement, anybody would dare call my present fast a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. If there is any such person, I can only tell him that he would degrade and hurt himself, never the Sardar or me. Have I not before now declared emphatically that no outside power can really degrade a man? A man only can degrade himself. And though I know that this sentence is irrelevant here, it is such a truth, that it bears repetition on all occasions. My fast, as I have stated in plain language, is undoubtedly on behalf of the Muslim minority in the Indian Union and, therefore, it is necessarily against the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Union and the Muslims of Pakistan. It is also on behalf of the minorities in Pakistan, as in the case of the Muslim minority in the Indian Union. This is a clumsy compression of the idea I have already explained. I cannot expect the fast taken by a very imperfect and weak mortal, as I truly confess I am, to have the potency to make its proteges proof against all danger. The fast is a process of self-purification for all. It would be wrong to make any insinuation against the purity of the step.

"The third question is: 'Your fast has been undertaken on the eve of the meeting of the United Nations Security Council at Lake Success and soon after the Karachi riots and the Gujrat massacre. What publicity the latter incidents received in the foreign press is not known. But undoubtedly, your fast has overshadowed all the other incidents. And Pakistan representatives would not be worth their reputation, if they do not seize the opportunity to declare that the Mahatma has undertaken the fast to bring sanity among his Hindu followers, who have been making the life of the Muslims in India impossible. Truth takes a long time to reach the four corners of the globe. But in the meantime, your fast may have the unfortunate effect of prejudicing our case in the eyes of the United Nations.'

"This question does not demand, or need, any elaborate answer. From all I have known of the powers and peoples outside India, I make bold to say that the fast has created only a healthy impression. The outsiders who are able to take an impartial and an unbiased view

of what is happening in India cannot distort the purpose of the fast, which is meant to bring sanity to all those who inhabit the Indian Union and Pakistan. It is impossible to save the Muslims in the Union if the Muslim majority in Pakistan do not behave as decent men and women. Happily for the cause, the Muslims of Pakistan, as Shrimati Mridulabehn's inquiry of yesterday made clear, have become wide awake to a sense of their duty. The United Nations know that my fast aids them to come to a right decision and to give the right guidance to the newly made two dominions."

The Government of India, owing to the dispute in Kashmir, had been withholding from the Government of Pakistan fifty-five crores of rupees, which they had previously agreed to hand over to them as part of the division of the assets of the whole of India. On the night of January 15, they decided to implement immediately the financial agreement with Pakistan "to remove the one cause of suspicion and friction." The communique said: "This decision is the Government's contribution, to the best of their ability, to the non-violent and noble effort made by Gandhiji, in accordance with the glorious traditions of this great country, for peace and goodwill."

On January 16th, the evening prayers were held as usual, but Gandhi was not able to be present. Before his dictated message was read out to the prayer audience, he addressed them on the microphone from his bed. He said he had not expected that he would be able to speak to them that day, but they would be pleased to learn that, if anything, his voice was less feeble that day, than the day before. He could not explain it, except for the grace of God. He never had felt so well on the fourth day of the fast in the past. If all of them continued to participate in the process of self-purification, he would probably have the strength to speak to them till the end. He was in no hurry to break the fast. Hurry would spoil matters. He did not want anyone to come and tell him that the things had been set right, while the process was incomplete. If Delhi became peaceful, in the real sense of the term, it would have its repercussions all over the country. He had no desire to live, unless peace reigned in the two dominions of India and Pakistan.

In his written message to the prayer gathering, he said:

"It is never a light matter for any responsible Cabinet to alter a deliberate settled policy. Yet our Cabinet, responsible in every sense of the term, have with equal deliberation, yet promptness, unsettled

their settled fact. The Cabinet deserve the warmest thanks from the whole country, from Kashmir to Cape Comorin and from Karachi to the Assam frontier. And I know that all the nations of the earth will proclaim the present gesture as one, which only a large-hearted Cabinet like India's could rise to. This is no policy of appeasement of the Muslims. This is a policy, if you like, of self-appeasement. No Cabinet, worthy of being the representative of a large mass of mankind, can afford to take any step, merely because it is likely to win the hasty applause of an unthinking public. In the midst of insanity, should not our best representatives retain sanity and bravely prevent a wreck of the ship of the state under their management? What then was the actuating motive? It was my fast. It changed the whole outlook. Without the fast, the Cabinet could not go beyond what the law permitted and required them to do. But the present gesture, on the part of the Government of India, is one of unmixed goodwill. It has put the Pakistan Government on its honour. It ought to lead to an honourable settlement, not only of the Kashmir question, but of all the differences between the two dominions. Friendship should replace the present enmity. The demands of equity supersede the letter of law. There is a homely maxim of law, which has been in practice for centuries in England, that when common law seems to fail, equity comes to the rescue. Not long ago, there were even separate courts for the administration of law and of equity. Considered in this setting, there is no room for questioning the utter justice of this act of the Union Government. If we want any precedent, there is a striking one at our disposal in the form of what is popularly known as the MacDonald Award. That award was really the unanimous judgement of not only the members of the British Cabinet, but also of the majority of the members of the Second Round Table Conference. The award was undone overnight, as a result of the fast undertaken in Yeravda prison.

"I have been asked to end the fast, because of this great act of the Union Government. I wish, I could persuade myself to do so. I know that the medical friends who, of their own volition and at considerable sacrifice, meticulously examine me from day to day, are getting more and more anxious, as the fast is being prolonged. Because of the defective kidney function, they dread not so much my instantaneous collapse, as the permanent after-effects of any further prolongation. I did not embark upon the fast, after consultation with the medical

men, be they however able. My sole guide, even dictator, was God, the Infallible and the Omnipotent. If He has any further use for this frail body of mine, He will keep it, in spite of the prognostications of the medical men and women. I am in His hands. Therefore, I hope you will believe me when I say, that I dread neither death, nor permanent injury, even if I survive. But I do feel that this warning of the medical friends should, if the country has any use for me, hurry the people up to close their ranks. And like brave men and women, that we ought to be, under the hard-earned freedom, we should trust even those whom we may suspect as our enemies. Brave people disdain distrust. The letter of my vow will be satisfied, if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi bring about a union, which not even a conflagration around them in all the other parts of India or Pakistan will be strong enough to break. Happily, the people in both the dominions seem to have instinctively realized that the fittest answer to the fast should be a complete friendship between the two dominions, such that members of all communities should be able to go to either dominion, without the slightest fear of molestation. Self-purification demands nothing less. It will be wrong for the rest of the two dominions to put a heavy strain upon Delhi. After all, the inhabitants of the Indian Union are not superhuman. In the name of the people our Government have taken a liberal step without counting the cost. What will be Pakistan's counter gesture? The ways are many, if there is the will. Is it there?"

On the 17th, the public prayers were held as usual. Gandhi spoke for a few minutes from his bed:

"I repeat what I have said before—nothing is to be done under pressure of the fast. I have already observed before that things done under pressure of a fast, have been undone after the fast is over. If any such thing happens, it would be a tragedy of the highest degree. There is no occasion for it, at any time. What a spiritual fast does expect is cleansing of the heart. The cleansing, if it is honest, does not cease to be, when the cause which induced it ceases. The cleansing of a wall seen in the form of a whitewash does not cease, when the dear one has come and gone. This material cleansing is bound to require renovation after some time. Cleansing of the heart once achieved only dies with one's death. Apart from this legitimate and laudable pressure, the fast has no other function, which can be described as proper.

"The number of telegrams coming from rajas, maharajas and the laity continues to increase. There are telegrams from Pakistan too. They are good, so far as they go. But as a friend and well-wisher, I must say to all those who reside in Pakistan and mould its fortune that they will fail to make Pakistan permanent, if their conscience is not quickened and if they do not admit the wrongs for which Pakistan is responsible.

"This does not mean that I do not wish a voluntary reunion, but I wish to remove and resist the idea that Pakistan should be reunited by the force of arms. I hope that this will not be misunderstood as a note of discord, whilst I am lying on what is truly a death-bed. I hope all Pakistanis will realize that I would be untrue to them and to myself, if, out of weakness and for fear of hurting their feelings, I failed to convey to them what I truthfully feel. If I am wrong in my estimate, I should be so told, and if I am convinced, I promise that I shall retract what I have said here. So far as I know, the point is not open to question.

"My fast should not be considered a political move, in any sense of the term. It is in obedience to the peremptory call of conscience and duty. It comes out of felt agony. I call to witness my numerous Muslim friends in Delhi. Their representatives come to me almost everyday to report the day's events. Neither the rajas and the maharajas nor the Hindus and the Sikhs, or any others, would serve themselves or India as a whole, if at this, what is to me a sacred juncture, they mislead me with a view to terminating my fast. Let them know that I feel never so happy, as when I am fasting for the spirit. This fast has brought me higher happiness, than hitherto. No one need disturb this happy state, unless he can honestly claim that in his journey he has turned deliberately from Satan towards God."

The feverish anxiety into which the country had been plunged was terminated when Gandhi broke his fast on January 18, at 12.45 p.m. Earlier in the day, the representatives of all the organizations in the city, including the representatives of the refugees and from the three worse affected parts of the city, namely, Karol Bagh, Sabzi Mandi and Paharganj, had assembled under the chairmanship of Rajendra Prasad and put their signatures to a seven-point declaration, covering the conditions laid down by Gandhi for breaking his fast:

"We wish to announce that it is our heart-felt desire that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and the members of the other communities should

once again live in Delhi like brothers and in perfect amity, and we take the pledge that we shall protect the life, property and faith of the Muslims and that the incidents which have taken place in Delhi will not happen again.

"We want to assure Gandhiji that the annual fair at the Khwaja Qutab-ud-Din Mazar will be held this year, as in previous years.

"The Muslims will be able to move about in Sabzi Mandi, Karol Bagh, Paharganj and other localities, just as they could in the past.

"The mosques which have been left by the Muslims and which are now in the possession of the Hindus and the Sikhs, will be returned; and the areas which have been set apart for the Muslims will not be forcibly occupied.

"We shall not object to the return to Delhi of the Muslims who have migrated from here, if they choose to come back, and Muslims shall be able to carry on their business as before.

"We assure that these things will be done by our personal efforts and not with the help of the police or military.

"We request Mahatmaji to believe us and to give up his fast, and continue to lead us, as he has done hitherto."

The document was recorded both in the Persian and in the Devanagari scripts, at Gandhi's insistence. Maulana Azad was present at the meeting. Muslims of Delhi were represented by Hifzur Rahman and Ahmed Saeed of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Maulana Habib-ur-Rahman. Messrs. Goswami Ganesh Datt, Basantlal and Narain Das represented the R.S.S. and the Hindu Mahasabha. There were also the representatives of the various Sikh organizations. They then all repaired, numbering more than a hundred, to the Birla House, where they assembled in Gandhi's room to request him to break the fast. Nehru had arrived there already. Mr. Zahid Hussain, the Pakistan's High Commissioner, came in, a little later.

Rajendra Prasad opened the proceedings by narrating to Gandhi how they had all assembled on the previous night at the former's residence and, after full discussion, had decided to sign the declaration then and there. But as the representatives of some organizations were not present in that meeting, they felt that they should not go to him immediately with the signed document, but wait till the remaining signatures were also obtained. They had accordingly met again in the morning, when all those who were absent during the previous night's meeting came and gave their signatures. It was found in the course

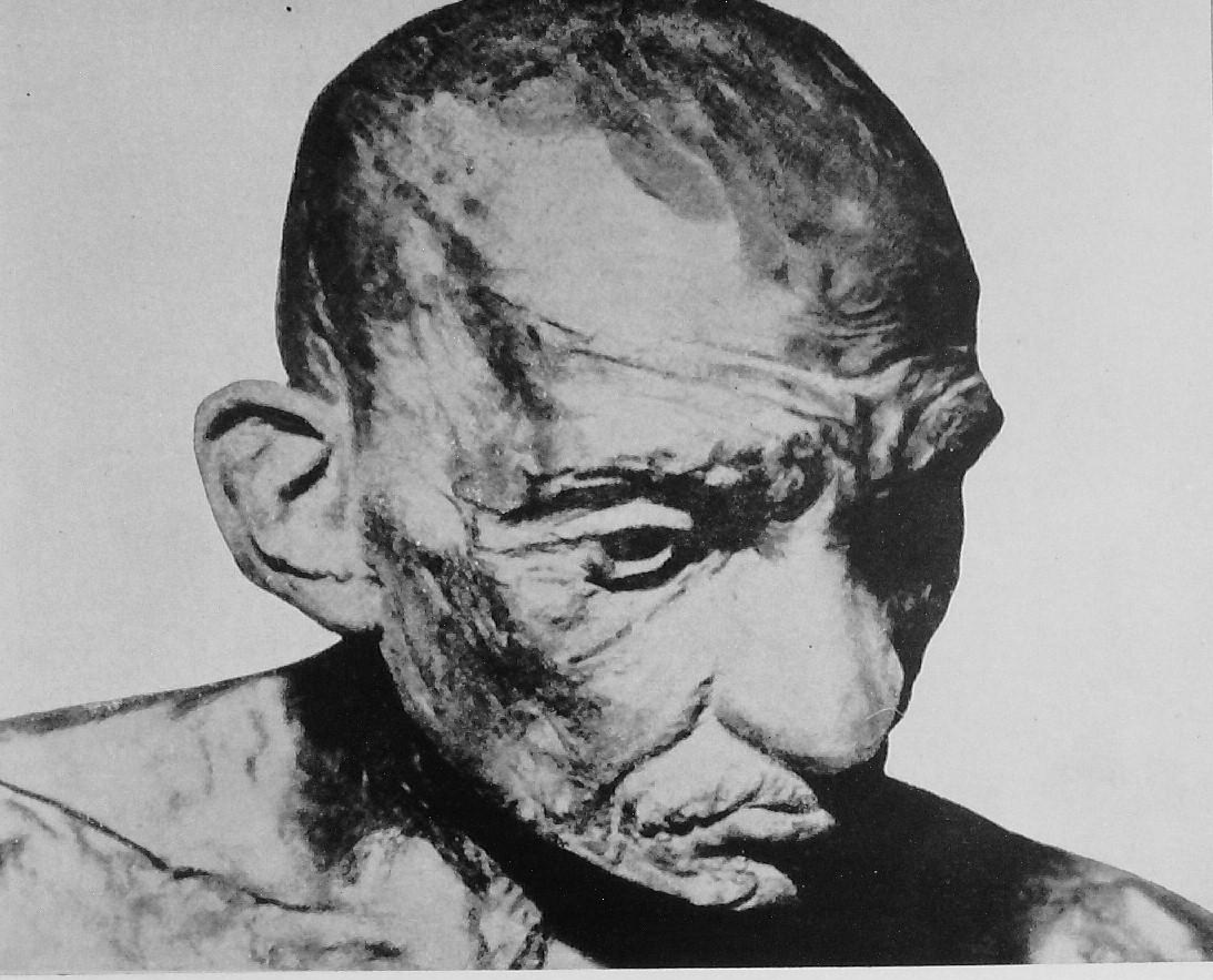
of the morning meeting, Dr. Rajendra Prasad reported, that even those who had some lingering doubts on the previous night were now quite confident that they could ask Gandhi, with a full sense of their responsibility, to break the fast. As the President of the Congress, Dr. Rajendra Prasad said that he had signed the document, in view of the guarantee which they had all jointly and severally given. Mr. Khurshid, the Chief Commissioner, and Mr. Randhawa, the Deputy Commissioner of Delhi, who were present, had signed the document on behalf of the administration. It had been decided to set up a number of committees to implement the pledge. Rajendra Prasad hoped that Gandhi would now terminate his fast.

Mr. Gupta, speaking next, described touching scenes of fraternization between the Hindus and the Muslims which he had witnessed when a procession of about 150 Muslims was taken out that morning in Sabzi Mandi and was received with ovation and offered fruit and refreshments by the Hindu inhabitants of that locality.

Gandhi stated in reply that what they had told him had touched him deeply. Indeed, they had given him all that he had asked for. But if their words meant that they held themselves responsible for communal peace in Delhi only and what happened in other places was no concern of theirs, then their guarantee was nothing worth and he would feel and they too would one day realize that it was a great blunder on his part to have given up his fast. As an illustration, he referred to the report of the happenings in Allahabad that had appeared in the press. The representatives of the R.S.S. and the Hindu Mahasabha were among the signatories to the seven-point declaration. If they were sincere in their professions, surely, they could not be indifferent to the outbreaks of madness in places other than Delhi. It would be a fraud upon God, if they did so. Delhi was the heart of the Indian Dominion and they, the representatives gathered there, were the cream of Delhi. And if they could not make the whole of India realize that the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were all brothers, it would bode ill for the future of both the dominions. What would happen to Hindustan, if they quarrelled with one another?

Here Gandhi broke down owing to overwhelming emotion, as he explained on resumption. What he had stated was repeated aloud by Pyarelal and partly by Sushila Nayyar.

Resuming his remarks, he again appealed to them to search well their hearts, so that they might not take any step which they would



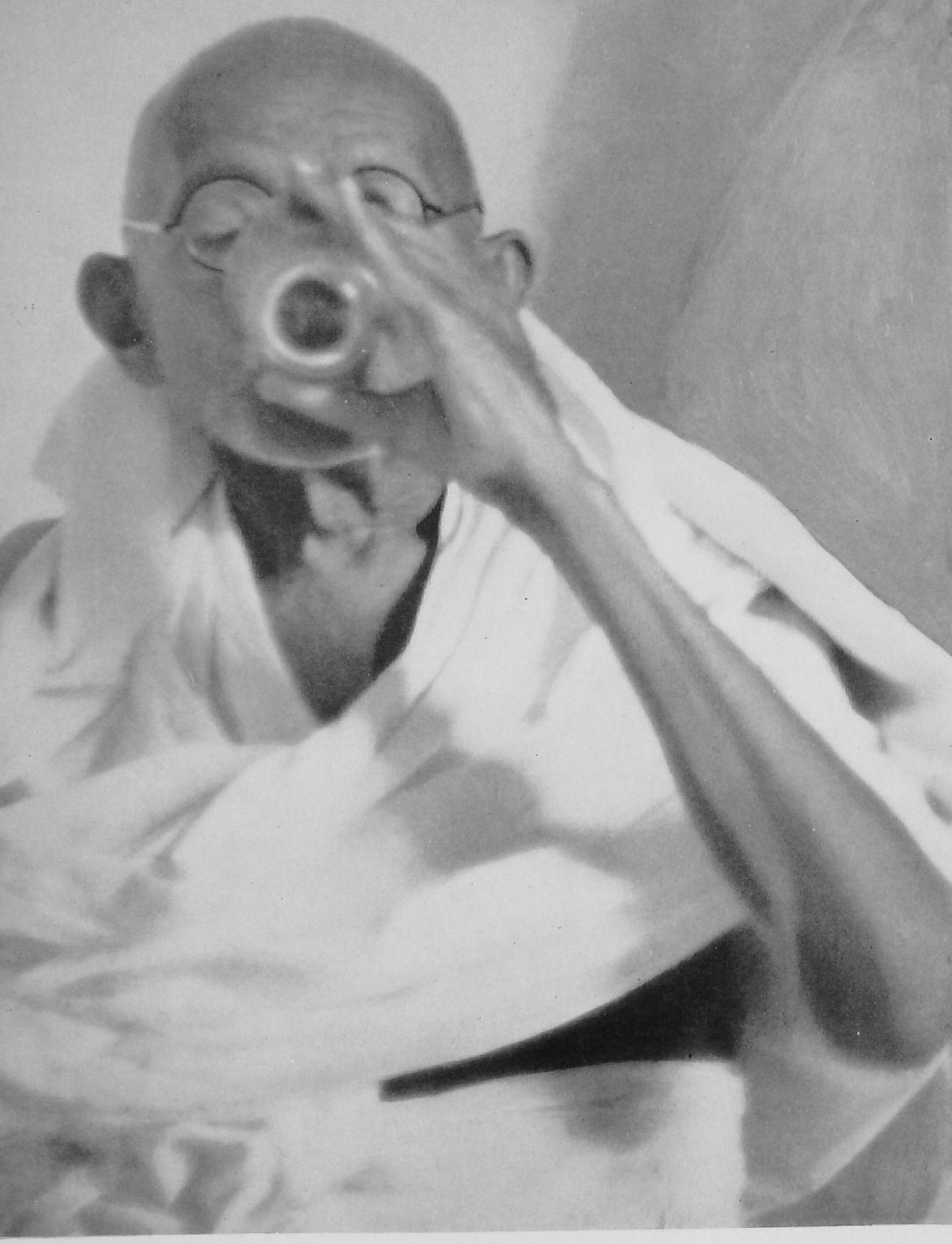
Gandhi's bust by Mrs. William Floyd

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

During the last fast, Delhi, January 17, 1948

Photograph : Henri Cartier-Bresson

Representatives of various organizations pledge their word for communal peace and request Gandhi to break his fast, January 18, 1948



Photograph : Henri Cartier-Bresson

Gandhi breaking his fast,

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Delhi, January 18, 1948

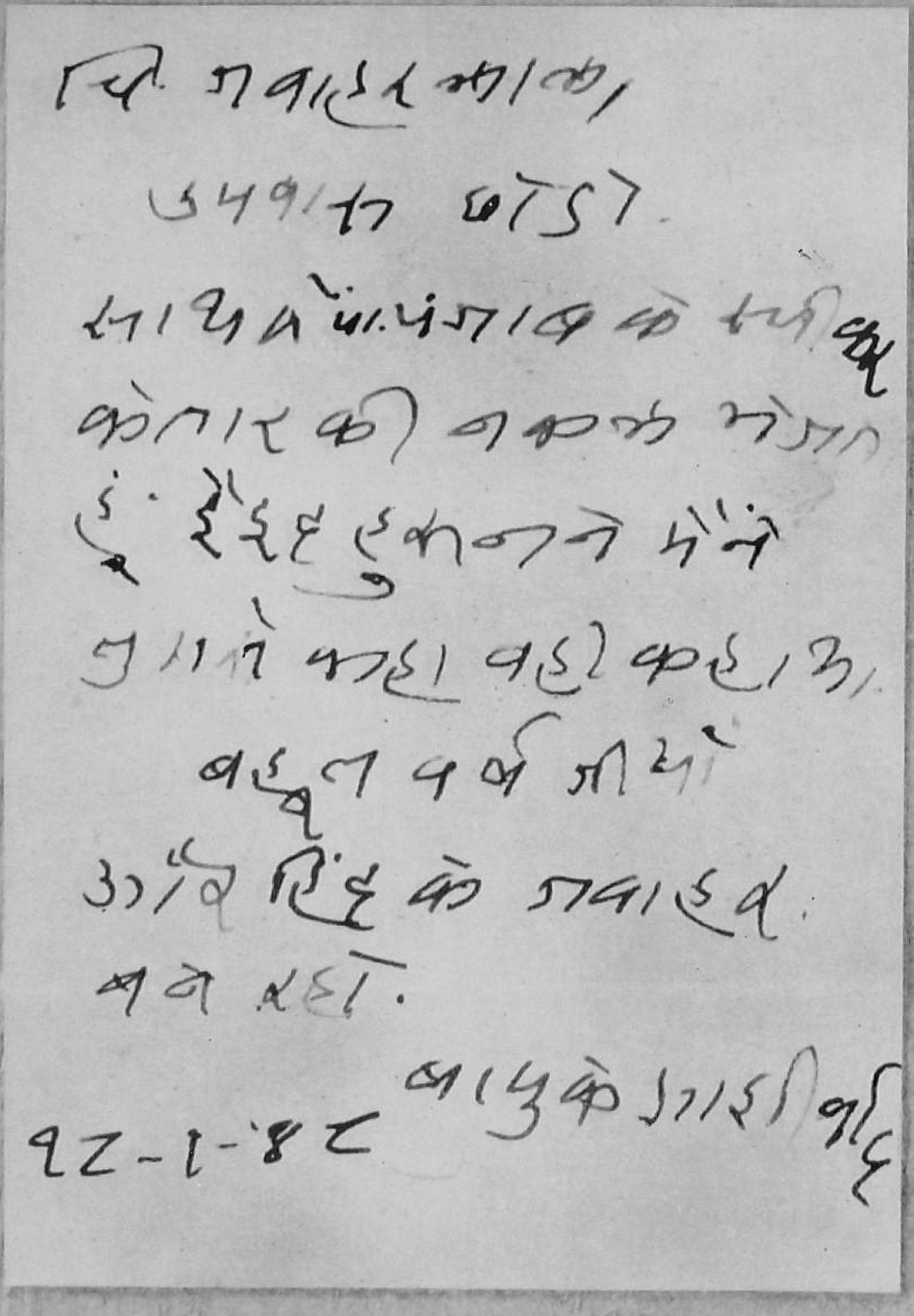
I have great pleasure in communicating to you the relevant extracts from the speeches made on the floor of the house on the 13th Jan with reference to the selfless & noble objective of your great fast. The sentiments expressed are fully shared by myself and the house. Malik Mohd Feroz Khan Noon. "No country in the

world has produced a greater man, religious founders apart, than Mahatma Gandhi." Hon'ble Mian Mohd Mumtaz Khan Daultana, Finance Minister. "It is our foremost duty to appreciate our feelings which Mahatma Gandhi's fast reveals towards the Muslims. This shows that there is at least one man in India who is ready to sacrifice even

life for Hindu Muslim unity. We pray to Almighty God that there may not be any further need for continuing this fast. I assure Mahatma Gandhi from the floor of this house that his feelings for the protection of minorities are fully shared by us." Hon'ble Khan Iftikhar Hussain Khan, Premier. "I on my own and my colleague's behalf express

deep ~~apprecia~~ admiration and sincere appreciation with great feelings of concern for Mahatma Gandhi's great gesture for the furtherance of a noble cause. No efforts will be spared in this province to help in saving his precious life. — Speaker West Punjab Legislative Assembly.

Gandhi sent a copy of a telegram from West Punjab to Nehru
sympathetic fast : " May you long


चि. जवाहरलाल,
उपवास छोड़ो.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
बहुत वर्ष जीओ
और हिंद के जवाहर
बने रहो.
बापुके आशीर्वाद
१८-१-४८

Courtesy: *Jawaharlal Nehru*

with a note, dated January 18, 1948, asking him to end his
remain *Jawahar*, the Jewel of India."

Photograph : Henri Cartier-Bresson

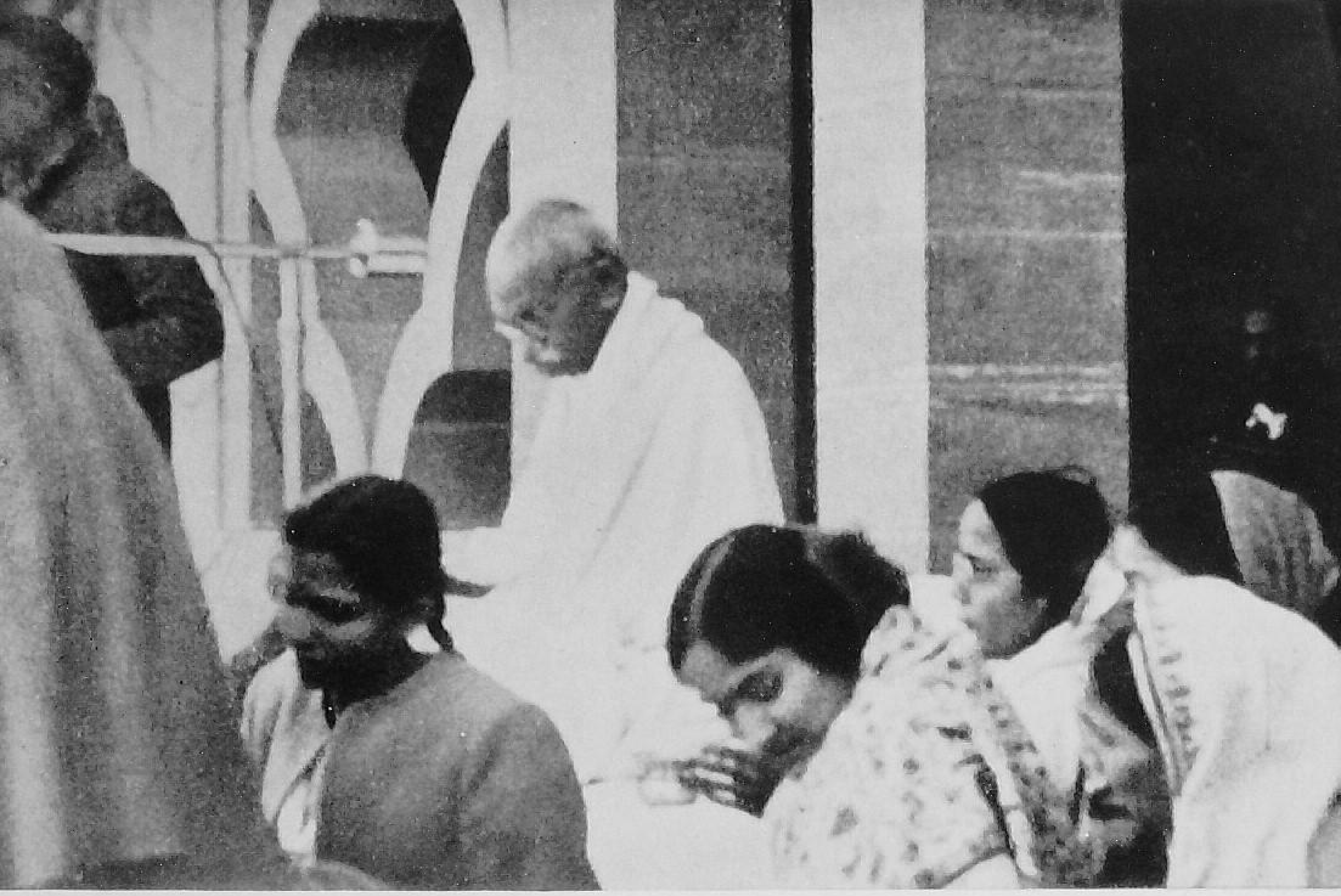
Writing a prayer message, January 18, 1948

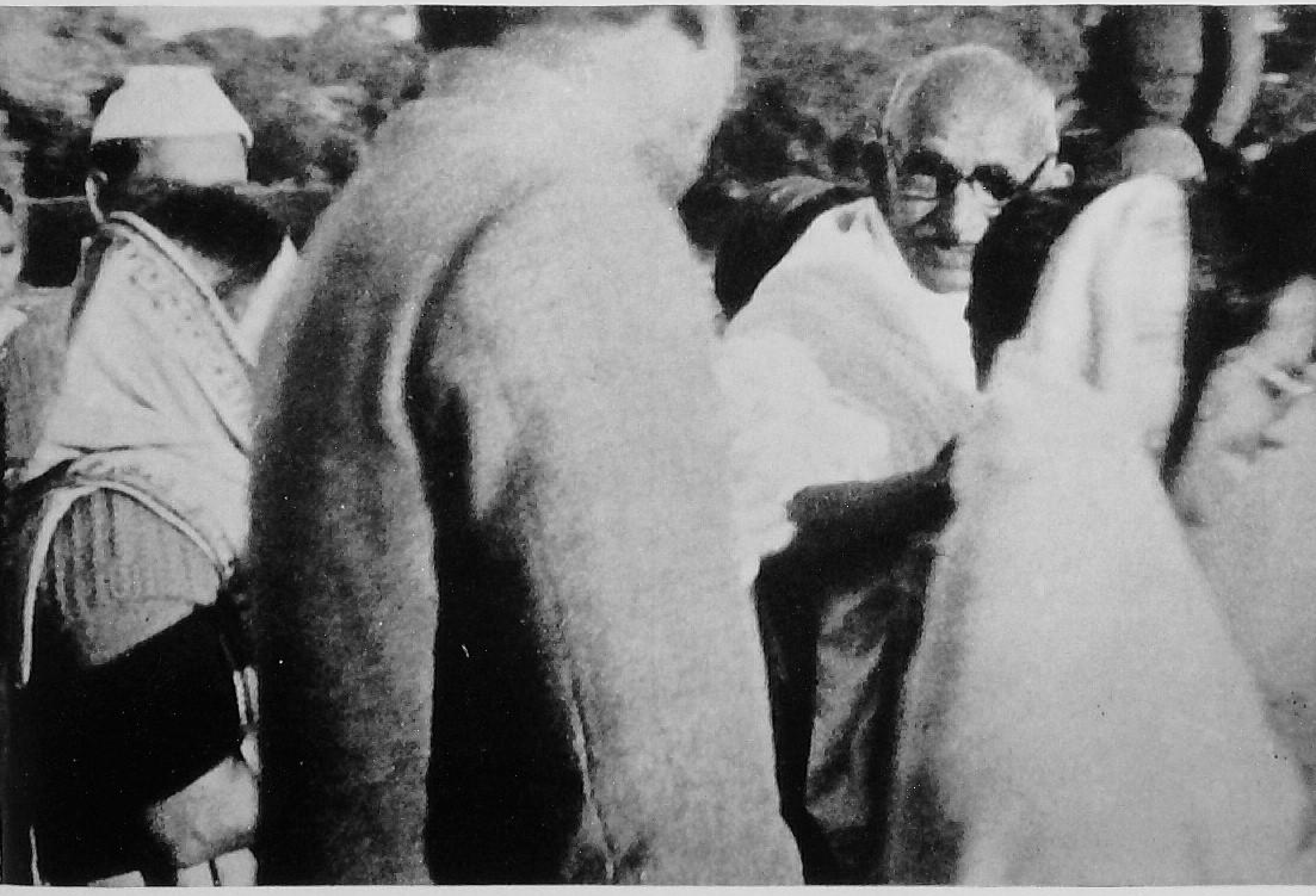
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi being carried to the prayer ground after the fast, January 20, 1948

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

The damaged wall indicates where the bomb meant for Gandhi exploded during the prayers on the ground of Birla House, Delhi, January 20, 1948





From Sumati Morarjee Collection

At the last prayer meeting, January 29, 1948

A woodcut by Vinayak S. Masoji

have to regret afterwards. The occasion demanded of them bravery of the highest order. They should clearly realize the implications of their pledge. It was nothing less than that what they had achieved in Delhi, had to be realized in the whole of India. That did not mean that the ideal could be realized in a day. But it did mean that whilst in the past they had turned their face towards Satan, they had now resolved to turn it godward. If, in their hearts, they did not accept what he had placed before them, or if they had made up their minds that it was beyond them, they should plainly tell him so.

There could be nothing more wrong on their part, than to hold that Hindustan belonged only to the Hindus and that the Muslims could have no place in it or, on the reverse, that Pakistan belonged to the Muslims only, and that the Hindus and the Sikhs could have no place in it. He wanted the refugees to understand that if they set things right in Delhi, as he had suggested, that was the only way to set things right in Pakistan too. He reminded them that he was not a man to shirk another fast, should he afterwards discover that he had been deceived, or he had deceived himself into breaking it prematurely. They should, therefore, act with circumspection and cent per cent sincerity. He invited the representatives of Muslims, who had been meeting him frequently, to tell him whether they were satisfied that the conditions in Delhi were now such as to warrant breaking the fast on his part.

Addressing next a few words to the Muslims especially, he asked if there was any ground for the suspicion that the Muslims did not regard India as their country. They live in India in the midst of the Hindus because they could not help it, but one day they had to part company. He hoped that the suspicion was baseless. Similarly, if there was a Hindu who regarded Muslims as *yavanas* or *asuras*, incapable of realizing God, he was guilty of the worst blasphemy, which could have no room in the covenant which they had signed.

He then referred to a book, which one Muslim friend had lovingly presented him at Patna. In that book, the writer had propounded that according to the Koran, the kafirs, the Hindus, were worse than the poisonous reptiles and fit only to be exterminated. Not only was there no sin in using every conceivable variety of force or fraud, to compass that end, but it was meritorious in the eyes of God. He was sure that no god-fearing Muslims could subscribe to or even secretly sympathize with that creed. Some had dubbed the Hindus as image

worshippers. But it was not the stone image which they worshipped, but the God within, without whom not a particle of matter existed. If a devotee saw God in an image, it was not a thing for anybody to cavil at. Granting that his belief was a delusion, it deluded nobody but himself. It required magnanimity and breadth of outlook to understand and appreciate the religious convictions and practices of others. It was the same thing, if they considered the Koran or the Granth Saheb, as God.

In conclusion, he remarked that if they fully accepted the implications of their pledge, they should release him from Delhi, so that he might be free to go to Pakistan. In his absence, they should welcome such refugees from Pakistan, as might want to return to their homes. The latter were none too happy over there, just as the Hindus in the Indian Dominion were none too happy to lose a large number of Muslim artisans and craftsmen. It was not easy to reproduce in a day the traditional skill that had been acquired through generations. It was a loss on both sides, which no sane people would like willingly to perpetuate.

He once more asked them to turn the searchlight inward and not to deceive themselves or others by asking him to give up his fast, if what he had said did not find a responsive echo in their hearts.

Maulana Azad, being requested to speak, remarked that so far as the guarantee of communal peace was concerned, it could be given only by the representatives of the citizens of Delhi. He, however, did not want to leave unchallenged the Muslim friends' observation to which Gandhi had referred, as it referred to the teachings of Islam. The maulana had no hesitation in characterizing it as a libel on Islam. He quoted a verse from the Koran which was to the effect that all mankind are brethren, irrespective of their race or religion. The remarks to which Gandhi had referred were abhorrent to the teachings of Islam. They were only indicative of the insanity that had of late seized some sections of the people.

He was followed by Hifzur Rahman, who categorically repudiated the allegation that his co-religionists did not consider India as their country which claimed their full and undivided allegiance, but only as a place where they were forced to live by expediency and by the compulsion of circumstances. Their thirty years' unbroken record of the service of the nationalist cause, gave the lie to that charge. They regarded it as an insult to their nationalism to be asked to reiterate

their loyalty to India. He asserted that if India were to be attacked, they would all defend it to the last man as their country. They had plainly declared on more than one occasion that those who were not prepared to do so should leave India and go to Pakistan. Describing next the change that had come over the city as a result of Gandhi's fast, he said that they regarded it as a happy augury and a presage of the things to come. They were satisfied that the tide had definitely turned and it was now fast flowing in the direction of communal harmony and peace, when previously bitterness and hatred ran riot. Now that the administration had underwritten the assurance given by the representatives of the people, they were satisfied that the assurance would be implemented, though it might take some time. He, therefore, joined Rajendra Prasad in his appeal that Gandhi should break the fast.

After Mr. Ganesh Dutt had on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. reiterated that appeal, Mr. Zahid Hussain, the High Commissioner for Pakistan in Delhi, addressed a few words to Gandhi. He was there, he stated, to convey to Gandhi how deeply concerned the people in Pakistan were about him and how they were daily inundating him with anxious inquiries about his health. It was their heart's desire that circumstances might soon prevail which would enable him to break the fast. If there was anything that he could fittingly do towards that end, he was ready and so were the people of Pakistan.

Sardar Harban Singh endorsed on behalf of the Sikhs, what the others had said.

Gandhi then expressed his readiness to break the fast, which was done with the ceremony of prayer, at which texts from the Japanese, Muslim and Parsi scriptures were recited followed by the mantra:

"Lead me from untruth to truth,
From darkness to light,
From death to immortality."

A Christian hymn was then recited by the inmates of the ashram followed by Ramdhun. The glass of fruit juice was handed by Azad and Gandhi broke the fast, after fruit was distributed to all present.

Speaking on the microphone from his bed, at half past five, on the 18th of January, Gandhi said that he had earlier dictated a message for the prayer audience, which would be read out to them.

It was a happy day for him and for all of them. And he was glad that due to their kindness, he could break his fast on the auspicious

day of Guru Govind Singh's birthday anniversary. He could never forget the kindness which was daily being showered on him by the inhabitants of Delhi, the Pakistan sufferers and the Government and administrative authorities, since the fast began. He had experienced the same love at Calcutta. He could not forget the help that he had received from Shaheed Saheb, in restoring peace in Calcutta. But for him, the speaker would not have stopped in Calcutta. The people had many suspicions about Shaheed Suhrawardy Saheb's bona fide still. They should all forget the past and learn the duty of having friendly feelings towards all and being inimical to none. The millions of Muslims were not all angels, nor were all the Hindus and all the Sikhs. There were both good and bad specimens among all communities. Would they be less than friendly towards so-called criminal tribes amongst them?

The Muslims were a numerous community scattered all over the world. There was no reason why they, who stood for friendship with the whole world, should not be friends with the Muslims. He was not a fortune-teller, but God had given him intellect and understanding enough to know that, if, for some reason or other, they could not be friends with the Muslims of the Indian Union, then the Muslims of the whole world would be antagonized and they would lose India. Then India, including both the dominions, would once again pass under the foreign domination.

He had received the good wishes and blessings of numberless men and women. He had been assured that the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Jews, Christians and others, who lived in Delhi, would all live together as brothers. They would never quarrel among themselves again and in this assurance sufferers from Pakistan had also joined. This was no small matter. If the auspicious beginning was continued, it was bound to ensure peace in India and thence in Pakistan. This was not one man's work, but all, young and old, men and women, had to co-operate sincerely in the efforts. If this was not the meaning of the breaking of his fast, he had not done well in breaking it. Then they would have fulfilled the letter and killed the spirit. What was possible in Delhi, was possible in the rest of the Indian Union and, if communal peace reigned in the whole of the Union, Pakistan was bound to follow suit. They should shed all fear. Every Muslim child should feel safe among the Hindus and Sikhs. Up till now, our face was turned towards Satan, now, he hoped, it would be turned

godward. If they did so, the Indian Union would lead the way to world peace. He did not wish to live for any other purpose. Mere lip-service was no good. They must install God in their hearts. God was one, whatever the name given to Him. The realization of this truth, should end all enmity and intolerance.

Let the Hindus decide once for all that they would not quarrel. He would advise the Hindus as well as the Sikhs to read the Koran, as they read the Gita and the Granth Saheb. And to the Muslims he would advise that they should read the Gita and the Granth Saheb with the same reverence with which they read the Holy Koran. They should understand the meaning of what they read and should have equal regard for all religions. This was his lifelong practice and ideal. He claimed to be a sanatani Hindu, though he was not an idolater in the accepted sense. But he could not despise those who worshipped the idols. The idol worshipper saw God in the stone image. God was Omnipresent. And if it was wrong to seek God in a stone, how was it right to seek Him in a book called the Gita, the Granth Saheb, or the Koran? Was not that also idol worship? By cultivating tolerance and respect, they would be able to learn from all. Then they would forget the communal differences and live together in peace and amity. The disgraceful incidents, where men and women were thrown out of the moving trains, would then cease to occur. People would freely and fearlessly move about in the Union. He would never be at peace with himself, till Pakistan was just as safe for the Hindus and Sikhs and the Pakistan sufferers could return to their homes with honour and dignity, and the Muslims to theirs in the Union.

In his written message, Gandhi said:

"I embarked on the fast in the name of Truth, whose familiar name is God. Without living Truth, God is nowhere. In the name of God, we have indulged in lies, massacres of people, without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, children or infants. We have indulged in abductions and forcible conversions, and we have done all this shamelessly. I am not aware, if anybody has done these things in the name of Truth. With that same name on my lips, I have broken the fast. The agony of our people was unbearable. Rashtrapati Rajendra Babu brought over one hundred people, representing the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S., and representatives of the refugees from the Punjab, the N.-W. Frontier Province and Sind. In this very

representative company were present Zahid Hussain Saheb, High Commissioner for Pakistan, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi and the Deputy Commissioner, Shah Nawaz Khan, representing the I.N.A., Pandit Nehru, sitting like a statue, was, of course, there, as also the Maulana Saheb. Rajendra Babu read out a document in Hindustani signed by these representatives, requesting me not to put any further strain on them and end the agony by breaking the fast. Telegrams after telegrams have come from Pakistan and from the Indian Union urging me to do the same. I could not resist the counsel of all these friends. I could not disbelieve their pledge that come what may, there would be complete friendship between the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Jews, a friendship not to be broken. To break that friendship, would be to break the nation.

"As I write, comforting telegrams are deluging me. How I wish that God will keep me fit enough and sane enough to render the service of humanity, that lies in front of me! If the solemn pledge made today is fulfilled, I assure you all that it will revive with re-doubled force my intense wish and prayer before God that I should be enabled to live the full span of life, doing the service of humanity, till the last moment. That span of life, according to learned opinion, is at least 125 years, some say 133 years. The letter of my vow has been fulfilled early beyond expectation, through the great goodwill of all the citizens of Delhi, including the Hindu Mahasabha leaders and the R.S.S. leaders. The result could not be otherwise, when I find that thousands of refugees and others have been fasting, since yesterday. Signed assurances of heart friendship have been pouring in upon me from thousands. And the telegraphic blessings have come from all over the world. Can there be a better sign of God's hand in this act of mine? But beyond the letter of fulfilment of my solemn vow lies its spirit, without which the letter killeth. The spirit of the vow is sincere friendship between the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs of the Indian Union and a similar friendship in Pakistan. If the first is assured, the second must follow, as sure as day follows night. If there is darkness in the Union, it would be folly to expect light in Pakistan. But if the night in the Indian Union is dispelled beyond the shadow of a doubt, it cannot be otherwise in Pakistan, nor are the signs wanting in that direction. Numerous messages have come from Pakistan, not one of dissent. May God, who is Truth, guide us, as He has visibly guided us during all these six days."

On January 19, Gandhi's address was read out:

"My thanks go out to the senders of numerous telegrams from all over the world from the Indians and non-Indians, expressing their goodwill and anxiety. These show the correctness of the step I had taken. Not that I had the slightest doubt about it. I had none about this, as I never have had about the reality that God is and that His most graphic name is Truth. Now has begun a stream of telegrams of congratulations, heaving relief. These friends will forgive me for not sending personal acknowledgements. It is physically impossible to do so. I hope too that no such acknowledgement is expected by the senders. I feel constrained to single out here only two—one from the Premier of the West Punjab and the other from the Nawab of Bhopal. They are today labouring under grave distrust. Let the extracted passages speak for themselves. If these senders were not sincere, they would have spared themselves and me on the solemn occasion that the fast was.

"Here is from the Nawab of Bhopal: 'Your appeal for a reunion of hearts of all the communities cannot fail to find support from all people of goodwill in both the dominions, as will also any appeal for an understanding and friendly relations between India and Pakistan. We in Bhopal have been able happily to face our troubles during the past year in a spirit of concord, amity and goodwill between all the communities, with the result that not a single untoward incident has occurred to mar the peace of Bhopal state. We assure you that we shall strive to further this friendly spirit with all our strength at our command.'

"I give here the full text of the wire from the Premier of the West Punjab: 'The West Punjab ministry expresses deep admiration and sincere appreciation for your great gesture for the furtherance of a noble cause. This ministry has always stood for the principle of doing everything possible to protect the lives, honour and property of the minorities, and giving them equal rights of citizenship. We assure you that this ministry will follow this policy with redoubled vigour. We are anxious to see an immediate improvement in the situation throughout the Indian sub-continent, which may enable you to break your fast. No effort will be spread in this province to help in saving a life, as precious as yours.'

"In this age of senseless imitation, my warning is that it would be foolish for anybody to embark on such a fast, expecting the identical

results in an identically short space of time. If anyone does, he will face severe disappointment and will discredit what is a hoary and infallible institution. Two severe qualifications are necessary—a living faith in God and a felt peremptory call from Him. I am tempted to add a third, but it is superfluous. A peremptory call from God within, presupposes the rightness, timeliness and propriety of the cause, for which the fast is taken. It follows that a long previous preparation is required. Let no one, therefore, lightly embark on such a fast.

"The citizens of Delhi and the refugees have a heavy task in front of them. Let them seek the occasions for meeting together, as often as possible, in perfect mutual trust. It was a soul-stirring sight for me to meet the Muslim sisters in large numbers yesterday. The girls in my party told me that the sisters were sitting in Birla House, uncertain whether they could come to me. They were in purdah, most of them. I asked them to be brought in, and they came. I suggested that they would never have the purdah before their fathers or their brothers. Why should they think me less? And off went the purdah, without exception. This is not the first time that the purdah has disappeared before me. I mention the incident to illustrate what genuine love, as I claim mine to be, is able to do. The Hindu and the Sikh women should go to the Muslim sisters and establish friendship with them. They should invite them on the ceremonial occasions and be invited. Muslim girls and boys should be attracted to common schools, not communal. They should mix in sports. Not only should there be no boycott of the Muslims, but they should be induced to resume their previous occupations. Delhi is poorer for the disappearance of the exquisite workmanship of the Muslims. It is a miserable and miserly thing for the Hindus and the Sikhs to wish to take away from them their means of livelihood. On the one hand, there should be no monopoly and, on the other, there should be no attempt at deprivation. In this great country of ours, there is room for all. The peace committees that have been now formed, must not go to sleep, as many committees unfortunately do in all countries. The condition of keeping me in your midst is that all communities in India live at peace with one another, not by force of arms, but that of love, than which, there is no better cement to be found in the world."

The successful ending of Gandhi's fast was prominently featured by several papers all over the world. The French journal, *Le Mond,* wrote: "Mahatma Gandhi's 'secret weapon'—that spiritual violence

which was taught so long ago by the gospels and the men of the gospels—will, perhaps, be the best reply to the atomic bombs. His voice carries far beyond the frontiers of India. If, in our turbulent western world, it is still far from dominating the voice of violence, it is none the less among those voices to which we must listen, and which will carry far beyond our times. Is not this a voice to which men will be forced to listen one day soon in the atomic age?"

The journal added that the Mahatma had gained one of the finest victories of his life in obtaining by his fast a peace pledge between the Hindus and the Muslims in Delhi. It further observed that the occasions were much too rare, when its editorial could escape from the often sordid considerations of politics and "still rarer those of seeing that, in the disorder and confusion of our times, the spirit has its victories and violence its defeat. Through Mahatma Gandhi, the East teaches us again, that there exists another sort of revolution than the revolutions of hate. The good Gandhi, product of a country, which is still wise enough to give itself the sages for the heroes—not warriors and politicians—shows himself once again to be the greatest rebel of our time."

Sir Mohamed Zafrullah Khan, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, informed the United Nations Security Council at Lake Success that "a new and tremendous wave of feeling and desire for friendship between India and Pakistan is sweeping the sub-continent in response to the fast."

Light Goes Out

1948

On January 20, 1948, two days after the termination of the fast, an attempt was made to throw a bomb at Gandhi, as he was addressing a prayer meeting in the Birla House compound. The bomb exploded some fifty yards away from where he was sitting, but nobody was injured. Madan Lal, a Hindu youth, described as a refugee from the West Punjab, was arrested and an unexploded hand-grenade was recovered from his pocket. The explosion was loud enough to be heard at a far-off distance. Gandhi remained unruffled.

Gandhi, addressing the prayer audience in a feeble voice, observed that Delhi had done a great thing and he hoped that the signatories to the peace pledge had given their signatures with God, in the form of Truth, as their witness. He had heard that there was a repudiation of the pledge on behalf of an official of the Hindu Mahasabha. He was sorry. If the inhabitants of Delhi and the refugees in the capital would remain steadfast and not be swayed by the happenings elsewhere, they would save India and also Pakistan. Delhi was an ancient city. If Delhi acted truthfully and non-violently, the effects of its action would be felt all the world over. If they would carefully read the Sardar's speech at Bombay, they would realize that there was no difference of outlook between the Sardar, Panditji and himself. They were all working for the same end, although they might express it differently. None of them was the enemy of the Muslims. Enmity towards the Muslims amounted to enmity towards India. The least he expected them to do, was not to take the law into their own hands and commit inhuman acts. That would mean the end of the society. They were bound as respectable citizens to leave justice in the hands of their chosen Government. They and their newspapers were never tired of condemning in unmeasured terms the acts of those Americans as barbarous, who lynched the Negroes. Did similar acts on their part become less barbarous?

He next referred to his statement that he might now proceed to Pakistan. But that, he explained, could only happen, if the Pakistan Government were convinced that he was a man of peace and friend of the Muslims and would, therefore, like him to go to Pakistan. He would, however, in any case, have to wait, till the doctors declared him fit to undertake the journey. The doctors had said that the convalescence would take at least a fortnight and it would be some time, before he could take solid food. The liquids that he was now taking, included fruit juice, vegetable soup and the goat's milk, and this was enough in all conscience.

Referring to the sufferings of the Hindu and the Sikh refugees, he said that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was doing all that was possible, in order to bring them speedy relief. Jawaharlalji's heart bled for them. He was a man who would offer his own bedding to one in distress and pace up and down the whole night, in order to keep himself warm. His house was full. Being the Prime Minister of India, he had to accommodate guests, both Indians and foreigners. Still he had expressed a wish to offer one or two rooms in his own house to lodge the refugees. He expected other ministers, officials and men of means to do likewise. The speaker was convinced that this act of self-sacrifice on the part of India's foremost leader would be appreciated all over the world and would put a speedy end to the sufferings of the homeless refugees. It should gladden their hearts to note that this beautiful country of theirs had produced such great men, endowed with such a wonderful spirit of service and self-sacrifice. Jawahar was a real *jawahar*, a gem, and there were others, only not so lustrous, perhaps. If their leaders were doing all this for the people, it behoved them not to hurt their Muslim brethren. To hurt the Muslims was to hurt their leaders.

Speaking after prayers on January 21, Gandhi referred to the previous day's bomb explosion. He had been receiving anxious inquiries and praise for being unruffled during the accident. He thought that it was military practice and, therefore, nothing to worry about. He had not realized, till after the prayers, that it was a bomb explosion and that the bomb was meant against him. God only knew how he would have behaved in front of a bomb aimed at him and exploding. Therefore, he deserved no praise. He would deserve a certificate only if he fell as a result of such an explosion, and yet retained a smile on his face and no malice against the doer. What he wanted

to convey was that no one should look down upon the misguided young man who had thrown the bomb. He probably looked upon the speaker as an enemy of Hinduism. After all, had not the Gita said that whenever there was an evil-minded person damaging religion, God sent some one to put an end to his life? That celebrated verse had a special meaning. The youth should realize that those who differed from him were not necessarily evil. The evil had no life apart from the toleration of good people. No one should believe that he or she was so perfect, that he or she was sent by God to punish the evil-doers, as the accused seemed to flatter himself he was.

He had heard that the young man had without permission occupied a mosque for lack of other accommodation, and now that the police were getting all the mosques evacuated, he resented the act. It was a wrong thing on his part to have occupied the masjid in the first place and it was doubly wrong to defy the authorities, who had asked him to vacate it.

To those who were at the back of the young man, he would appeal to desist from such activities. That was not the way to save Hinduism. Hinduism could be saved only by his method. He had practised Hinduism from his early childhood. His nurse had taught him to invoke Rama, when he feared the evil spirits. Later on, he had come in contact with the Christians, Muslims and others and, after making a fair study of the other religions, had stuck to Hinduism. He was as firm in his faith today, as in his early childhood. He believed that God would make him an instrument of saving the religion that he loved and cherished and practised. In any case, one had to have constant practice and acquaintance with the fundamentals of religion, before being qualified for becoming God's instrument.

Continuing he said, that some Sikh friends came and said that he should not think that the Sikhs had anything to do with the bomb explosion. He knew that the youth was not a Sikh. But what did it matter, whether he was a Sikh or a Hindu or a Muslim? He wished well to all perpetrators. He had told the Inspector-General of Police also, not to harass the youth in any way. They should try to win him over and convert him to right thinking and doing. He hoped that the youth as well as his guides would realize their error. For, it was a wrong done to Hinduism and to the country. At the same time, he warned his hearers against being angry with the accused. He did not know that he was doing anything wrong. They should pity him. If they

harboured any resentment against his fast and they had still pledged themselves to maintain peace, in order to save an old servant of the nation, the guilt was theirs, and not that of the young man who had thrown the bomb. If, on the other hand, they had signed the peace pledge wholeheartedly, persons like the young man were ultimately bound to come to their way of thinking.

He expected the audience to go on with the prayers, in spite of bomb explosions or a shower of bullets. He was glad to learn that a poor unlettered woman was the cause of the arrest of the miscreant. If the heart was sound, if there was right thought, lack of letters was not of any consequence. He congratulated the unlettered sister on her simple bravery.

He then referred to a letter addressed to him during his fast. The writer of the letter had said that while he was in prison in 1942, the country had somewhat taken to violence. If he died of the fast, there would be such a violent upsurge in the whole country, that it would stagger humanity. Therefore, the writer had argued that for the sake of humanity, he should give up his fast. The speaker said that while it was true that the people had resorted to violence when he was locked up in jail, he did not think that his death under a fast should have the feared result. However, he had rehearsed before embarking on the fast the possibility of a wide fratricide. The Yadavas had destroyed each other before Lord Krishna's death. But the speaker was too insignificant a mortal, to produce such an effect. However, if the people had become indolent and vicious like the Yadavas, and God saw that there was no way out but extermination, He might make even an ordinary person like him, the instrument of such a catastrophe. Having completely left himself in God's hands, he worried no more about the consequences. What, however, he observed during the fast nerved him to hope that India had no such self-destruction in store for her.

In conclusion, he expressed satisfaction at the way the Muslims were freely moving about in Delhi. He wanted them to continue the process of self-purification and convert their hearts into temples of the living God of Truth.

For the first time after the fast, Gandhi was able to walk to the prayer ground on January 22nd. He said in his prayer speech that he was slowly gaining strength and, God willing, he hoped to return to his normal health before long.

Gandhi then went on to say that a friend had written to him that although Pandit Nehru and other ministers and the officials might lodge some refugees in their houses, that would not even touch the fringe of the refugee problem. The speaker agreed that the ministers and the officials together could not house more than a few thousands at the most. The virtue of the offer consisted not in the number so to be accommodated, but in the fact that the example of the leaders doing the act was proving infectious. The British people appreciated the least act of self-denial on the part of their king, for the sake of the people. All civilized people would appreciate and value such acts of leaders of men. Jawaharlal Nehru had set an example before the whole country. That this was so, was proved from the fact that more refugees were being attracted to Delhi. They felt evidently that they would be best treated in Delhi. While it was proof of the popularity of Panditji's example, it was proof also that we had not learnt the art of self restraint.

The second difficulty to which his attention was drawn was that while the Congress had been in the wilderness, it had set before the people the ideal of service, self-denial and simplicity. In those days, it was difficult to collect even a lakh of rupees. Today, the Congress Government was in charge of crores of rupees and they could raise as much as they liked. Were they to spend it, as if there was no change from the foreign rule to the indigenous rule? Some people seemed to think that India's leaders and ambassadors must live and spend money in a style befitting their independent status, and they must vie with independent America and England in stylishness. They thought that such expenditure was necessary, in order to uphold India's prestige in foreign countries. He did not think so. Independence was not synonymous with stylishness or with pomp. We had not cut our cloak according to our cloth. There was no merit in hiding our poverty. India's status in the world depended upon India's moral supremacy which her passive resistance had brought her. In this, India had no rival as yet, for the other nations, great or small, were proud of their armaments and their military valour. That was their capital. India possessed only her moral capital, which increased with the spending. On any other condition, the Congress claim to revolutionize values, when they came into power, would be forfeited. The people criticized the ministers for accepting high salaries and not bringing the artificial British standard down to the natural Indian standard. These critics

knew nothing of the private life of their ministers. But the fashion was for the Congressmen and the others to expect high emoluments, wholly out of keeping with what one was making out of office. One who managed to live once on Rs.150 per month, would not hesitate to demand and expect Rs.500. Such persons felt that they would not be appreciated, unless they demanded high salaries and they lived in the old Civil Service style and dressed up as such. That was not the way to serve India. They should not forget that a man's value did not depend upon the amount of money that he earned. The process of self-purification, which they all must share, demanded right thought and action.

January 23rd, being the anniversary of Subhas Bose's birthday, he referred to it in his prayer speech. He remarked that he generally did not remember such dates, nor did he attach much value to the dates of birth and death. He did not know, whether it was right or wrong for him to be so indifferent. But he was just reminded of the day and he was very glad that there was special reason to take note of Subhas Babu's birthday, in spite of the fact that the deceased patriot had believed in violence, whereas he believed in non-violence. However, he would not forget at this time that it was Subhas Babu, who knew no provincialism, nor communal differences. Subhas Babu had in his brave army men and women, drawn from all over India, without any distinction and evoked affection and loyalty, which very few have been able to evoke. A lawyer friend had asked the speaker for a good definition of Hinduism. Though he was a sanatani Hindu, he was unable to define Hinduism. He had forgotten his law for years. Nor was he learned in the science of religion. But as a layman, he could say that the Hinduism regarded all religions as worthy of all respect. Subhas Babu was, in his opinion, such a Hindu. And in memory of that great patriot, they should cleanse their hearts of all communal bitterness.

The gathering at the prayer meeting, which had been growing bigger and bigger for the last two days, reached unusual dimensions on Sunday, January 25th. Gandhi remarked that assurances were daily pouring in that all was well with Delhi and that there was nothing to worry, so far as the communal situation in the capital was concerned. It gladdened his heart to be told by his Hindu and Muslim friends that a reunion of hearts was in the course of being established and that the people were waking up to the truth that it would not be

possible for them to pursue their normal avocation, if they continued quarrelling among themselves. Having regard to the improved situation, he suggested that they might go one step further and that each Hindu and Sikh should make it a point to bring with him, at least one Muslim to the prayer gathering.

He next referred to the annual celebration of the *urs* at Bakhtiar Chishti's *dargah* at Mehrauli, which was to commence from the next day. During the riots, the *dargah* had been damaged by the miscreants and some of the stone lattice work was removed. Efforts had been made during the last few days to effect the repairs, so far as it was possible. Previously, both the Muslims and the Hindus used to visit the *dargah* and take part in the *urs*. If the Hindus could still go there in the same spirit of peace and devotion, it would be a great thing. He hoped that such Muslims, as might want to take part in it, would be assured the completest security and safety from insult or molestation and that also with the minimum assistance of the police. He would rather that they should all constitute themselves into police for that purpose. The eyes of the whole world were on them. Telegrams were pouring in from all quarters of the globe—from China, from Africa, from Europe and from America, expressing deep appreciation and admiration of what they had done in Delhi. He hoped that they would all so act, as to come up to the expectations that had been aroused. The transfer of power on the 15th of August, as a result of their passive resistance struggle, was a unique event in the history of the world. But then they fell from grace, and the Hindus and the Muslims and the Sikhs behaved towards one another like barbarians. It was, however, he thought, only a temporary distemper. Their hearts were sound. The fast seemed to have served to throw out the distemper. He hoped that the cure would be permanent, without the possibility of a relapse.

He hoped that they would now set him free to go to Wardha. But he could go only with their blessings, coupled with the solemn guarantee that things would be well during his absence. He wanted to go to Pakistan too. But since legally Pakistan was now foreign territory, he could go there only with the permission and consent, if not the invitation, of the Pakistan Government.

He next referred to the Congress Working Committee, which had been sitting for the last two days. He revealed that they had been discussing the question of reconstitution of the provinces on a linguistic

basis. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel were both present in that day's Working Committee meeting. The Congress had already adopted that principle and had declared its intention to give effect to it constitutionally, as soon as they came to power, as such redistribution would be conducive to the cultural advancement of the country. But such redistribution should not militate against the organic unity of India. Autonomy did not and should not mean disruption, or that hereafter the provinces could go the way they chose, independent of one another and of the Centre. If each province began to look upon itself as a separate sovereign unit, India's independence would lose its meaning, and with it would vanish the freedom of the various units, as well.

The charter of India's independence as conceived by the Congress was based on the village autonomy. But all the villages were to derive vitality from the Centre, as the centre in its turn derived all power and authority from the villages. It would be fatal, if it led to narrow provincialism, mutual bickerings and rivalries—between Tamil and Andhra, for instance, Bombay and Karnatak and so on. The redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis was necessary, if the provincial languages were to grow to their full height. Hindustani was to be the lingua franca, *rashtrabhasha,* of India, but it could not take the place of the provincial tongues. It could not be the medium of instruction in the provinces—much less English. Its function was to make them realize their organic relationship with India. The world outside did not know them as Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, Tamilians, etc., but as Indians only. We must, therefore, resolutely discourage all fissiparous tendencies and feel and behave as Indians. Subject to this paramount consideration, a linguistic redistribution of provinces should give an impetus to education and trade.

He fervently hoped that they would not need a boundary commission to delimit their frontiers on the new basis. That was the foreign way which they had discarded. The best thing would be for themselves to determine the boundaries on the new basis by mutual agreement and consent and place the same before their Prime Minister for his final sanction. That would be the true independence. To go to a third party, in the shape of a boundary commission, for a settlement would be a negation of independence. They must evolve interdependence and mutual help.

The following day, Gandhi's post-prayer address was read out:

"This day, 26th January, is Independence Day. This observance was quite appropriate, when we were fighting for independence we had not seen, nor handled. Now! We have handled it and we seem to be disillusioned. At least I am, even if you are not.

"What are we celebrating today? Surely not our disillusionment. We are entitled to celebrate the hope that the worst is over and that we are now on the road to showing the lowliest of the villager that it means his freedom from serfdom and that he is no longer a serf born to serve the cities and the towns of India, but that he is destined to exploit the city dwellers for the advertisement of the finished fruits of well thought-out labours, that he is the salt of the Indian earth, that it means also equality of all classes and creeds, never the domination and superiority of the major community over a minor, however insignificant it may be in number or influence. Let us not defer the hope and make the heart sick. Yet what are the strikes and a variety of lawlessness but a deferring of the hope? These are the symptoms of our sickness and our weakness. Let labour realize its dignity and strength. Capital has neither dignity nor strength, compared to labour. These, the man in the street also has. In a well-ordered democratic society, there is no room, no occasion for lawlessness or for strikes. In such a society, there are ample lawful means for vindicating justice. Violence, veiled or unveiled, must be taboo. Strikes in Cawnpore, coal mines or elsewhere, mean the material loss to the whole society, not excluding the strikers themselves. I need not be reminded that this declamation does not lie well in the mouth of one like me, who has been responsible for many successful strikes. If there be such critics, they ought not to forget that then there was neither independence, nor the kind of legislation we have now. I wonder, if we can remain free from the fever of power politics or the bid for power, which afflicts political world, the East and the West.

"Before leaving this topic of the day, let us permit ourselves to hope that though geographically and politically India is divided into two, at heart we shall ever be friends and brothers helping and respecting one another and be one for the outside world."

On the 27th, Mr. Kingsley Martin had an interview with Gandhi. Gandhi explained how the freedom movement had not been a non-violent movement in the highest sense of the term. If it had been the non-violence of the strong, no butchery, such as had taken place recently, could have come about. He discovered this, while he was on

his pilgrimage in Noakhali, and ever since this discovery, he had been impressing the fact on everyone. He felt that non-violence during the struggle for independence was an expedient, resistance to the white man was undertaken in a non-violent manner, simply because we had no military strength with which to offer battle.

He went on to relate how he had resisted a certain millionaire in South Africa, who had introduced him at a public meeting, as a mere passive resister and weak, because as an Indian there, he was landless and without any rights. He objected to this description and asserted that the real passive resistance had been miscalled a weapon of the weak. After all, Jesus Christ had been called the prince of passive resisters. Could he, in any sense of the term, be called a weak man? People forget that soul force, the only weapon of the truly non-violent man, was a weapon of the strong.

In reply to Mr. Martin's remark, that many people looked upon non-violence as a good opposition weapon in politics and that they could not understand how non-violence could, for example, be used as a positive weapon in Kashmir today, or against a man like Hitler, who just killed everybody and stamped out opposition in that manner, Gandhi laughingly said that he was not in charge of the Government and, therefore, he could not guide their policies; nor did he for a moment think that the members of the present Government believed in non-violence. He recalled how Maulana Azad had said, "When we gain power, we shall not be able to hold it non-violently." He said that he had laughed to himself at that time and related the moral of Tolstoy's story of *Ivan the Fool*, which had always remained with him. The Hindu scriptures had scores of such stories also, but he quoted *Ivan the Fool*, because the interviewer might have read the book. Ivan remained non-violent, even when he became king. Gandhi pointed out how the truly non-violent man can never hold power himself. He derives power from the people, whom he serves. For such a man or such a government, a non-violent army would be a perfect possibility. The voters then would themselves say "We do not want any military for our defence."

A non-violent army would fight against all injustice or attack, he added, but with clean weapons. "Non-violence does not signify that man must not fight against the enemy, and by enemy is meant the evil which men do, not the human beings themselves." He went on to say that if he were the leader of Kashmir like Sheikh Abdullah, he

would have such an army, but Sheikh Abdullah quite honestly and humbly thought otherwise.

On the correspondent suggesting a solution of the Kashmir issue on the basis of separation—the predominantly pro-Pakistan region, such as, Punch going to Pakistan and the Kashmir Valley remaining in India—Gandhi had no difficulty in giving a resolute answer in the negative. He held firmly that India, or any part of India, could not be divided in this manner. It was the evil that must not be allowed to continue. "Take, for example, Hyderabad; will you separate the town of Hyderabad from the rest of the state? Such pockets exist all over India and separation would become an endless process spelling the ruination of India." The interviewer pleaded that the position of Hyderabad was not wholly analogous. Any state on a border area was surely different. But Gandhi maintained that it was not possible for states, even on the border, to be either cut up or separated, or even for them to call themselves independent. And when the correspondent mentioned Gilgit, Gandhi recalled that he was in Kashmir, when the city of Srinagar was illuminated. On questioning what the illuminations were for, he was told that people were celebrating the accession of Gilgit to Kashmir. He was sad when he heard the news, because he wondered how long Kashmir would hold Gilgit. It had been a big bite, even for Britain. Britain's policy of keeping on adding to her territories in India, had not been either a wise or right policy. If Kashmir accedes to India, it will be because of the will of the people as a whole, and they will do so, well knowing that Gilgit is no part of the Indian Union today. There are people who say "they will reconquer Gilgit." All sorts of complications would then arise. He said that Great Britain had made of India a political whole, and India must continue as such.

In reply to a question as to what Pakistan could do with the tribal people, Gandhi said: "I would accept a challenge of conquering the tribal areas, but as a non-violent man. I would not bribe them, nor kill them; I would serve them. Have not missionaries allowed themselves to be eaten by cannibals?"

The correspondent exclaimed: "Alas! there are no Gandhis in the U.S.A., Palestine, or in Russia!"

Gandhi laughingly said: "So much the worse for them!"

In answer to a query as to why Punch going over to Pakistan was not impracticable and that a war between India and the North-West

Frontier would be unending, Gandhi replied that it would be a very bad example to others. There were pockets everywhere, for example, Murshidabad in West Bengal. And the vital difference between the policy of the Indian Union and that of Pakistan was that the Indian leaders never believed in dismemberment, while the Pakistan leaders did. Gandhi quoted the example of Kathiawad. Pakistan wanted to vivisect Kathiawad by getting Junagadh to accede to that dominion. Vivisection of Kathiawad which is indivisible was quite unthinkable. The whole basis of partition was, in his opinion, wrong. He admitted that two distinguished persons had suggested the idea of partition of Kashmir to him, but he had said a very firm "No".

In conclusion, he asked the correspondent to study things deeply and not superficially. He himself was working for a heart union between Hindus and Muslims, not only in India but in Pakistan also, and he would continue his efforts in that direction.

On January 27, he wrote an article entitled "Congress Position":

"The Indian National Congress, which is the oldest national political organization and which has after many battles fought her non-violent way to freedom, cannot be allowed to die. The Congress can only die with the nation. A living organism ever grows, or it dies. The Congress has won political freedom, but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom. These freedoms are harder than the political, if only because they are constructive, less exciting and not spectacular. All-embracing constructive work evokes the energy of all the units of the millions.

"The Congress has got the preliminary and necessary part of her freedom. The hardest has yet to come. In its difficult ascent to democracy, it has inevitably created rotten boroughs, leading to corruption and creation of institutions, popular and democratic, only in name. How to get out of the weedy and unwieldy growth?

"The Congress must do away with its special register of the members, at no time exceeding one crore, not even then easily identifiable. It had an unknown register of millions, who could never be wanted. Its register should now be co-extensive with all the men and women on the voters' rolls in the country. The Congress business should be to see that no faked name gets in and no legitimate name is left out. On its own register, the Congress will have a body of the servants of the nation, who would be workers doing the work allotted to them, from time to time.

"Unfortunately for the country, they will be drawn chiefly for the time being from the city-dwellers, most of whom would be required to work for and in the villages of India. The ranks must be filled in increasing numbers from villagers.

"These servants will be expected to operate upon and to serve the voters, registered according to law, in their own surroundings. Many persons and parties will woo them. The very best will win. Thus, and in no other way, can the Congress regain its fast ebbing unique position in the country. But yesterday, the Congress was unwittingly the servant of the nation, it was Khudai Khidmatgar—God's servant. Let the Congress now proclaim to itself and the world that it is only God's servant—nothing more, nothing less. If it engages in the ungainly skirmish for power, it will find one fine morning that it is no more. Thank God, the Congress is now no longer in sole possession of the field.

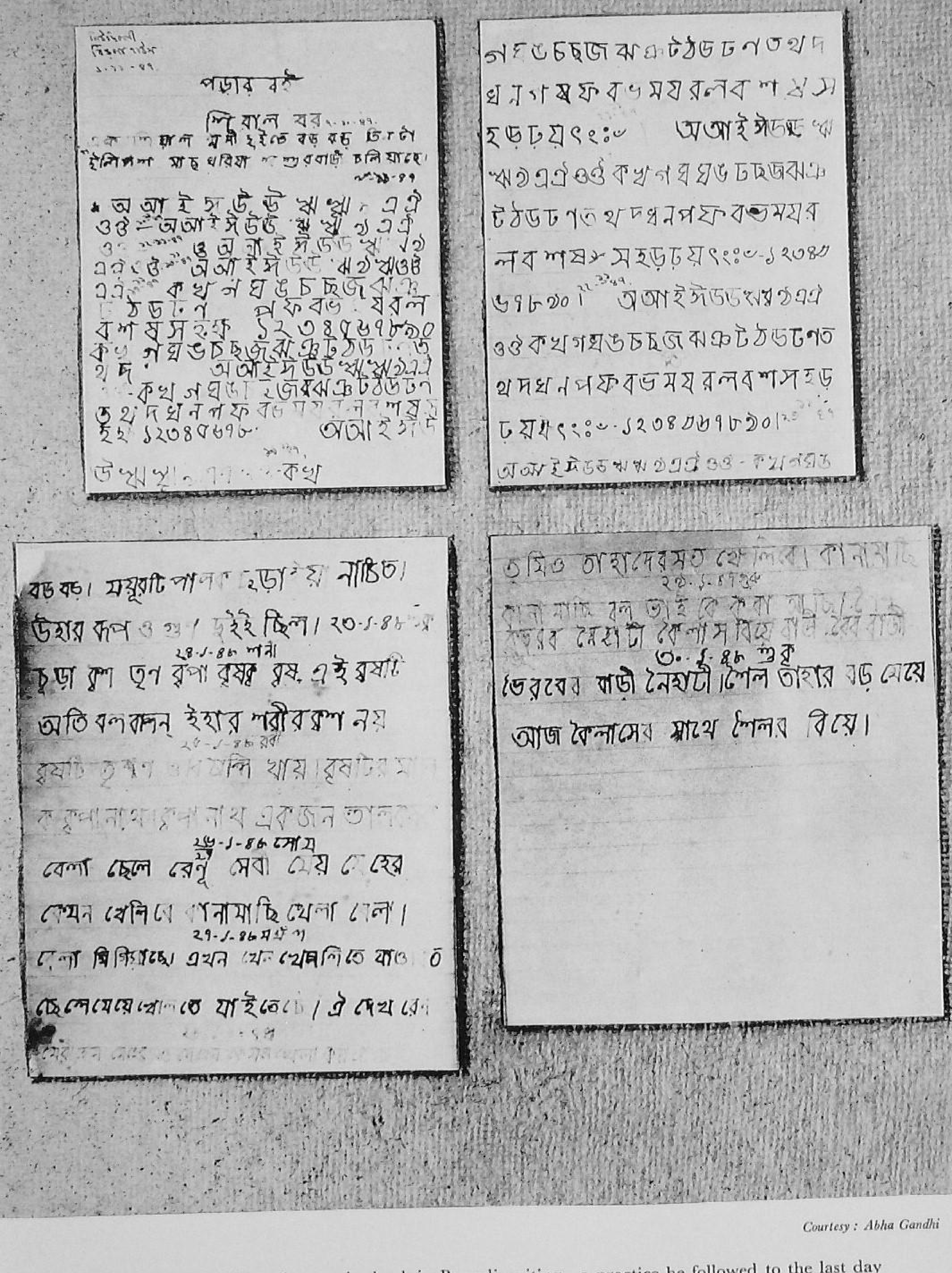
"I have only opened to view the distant scene. If I have the time and health, I hope to discuss in these columns what the servants of the nation can do to raise themselves in the estimation of their masters, the whole of the adult population, male and female."

Two days later, Gandhi sketched the following draft constitution for the Congress:

"Though split into two, India having attained the political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress, in its present shape and form, as a propaganda vehicle and a parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of India's seven hundred thousand villages, as distinguished from its cities and towns. The struggle for the ascendency of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. The Congress must be kept out of unhealthy competition with the political parties and communal bodies. For these and other similar reasons, the All-India Congress Committee resolves to disband the existing Congress organization and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh under the following rules with the power to alter them, as occasion may demand.

"Every panchayat of five adult men or women being villagers or village-minded, shall form a unit.

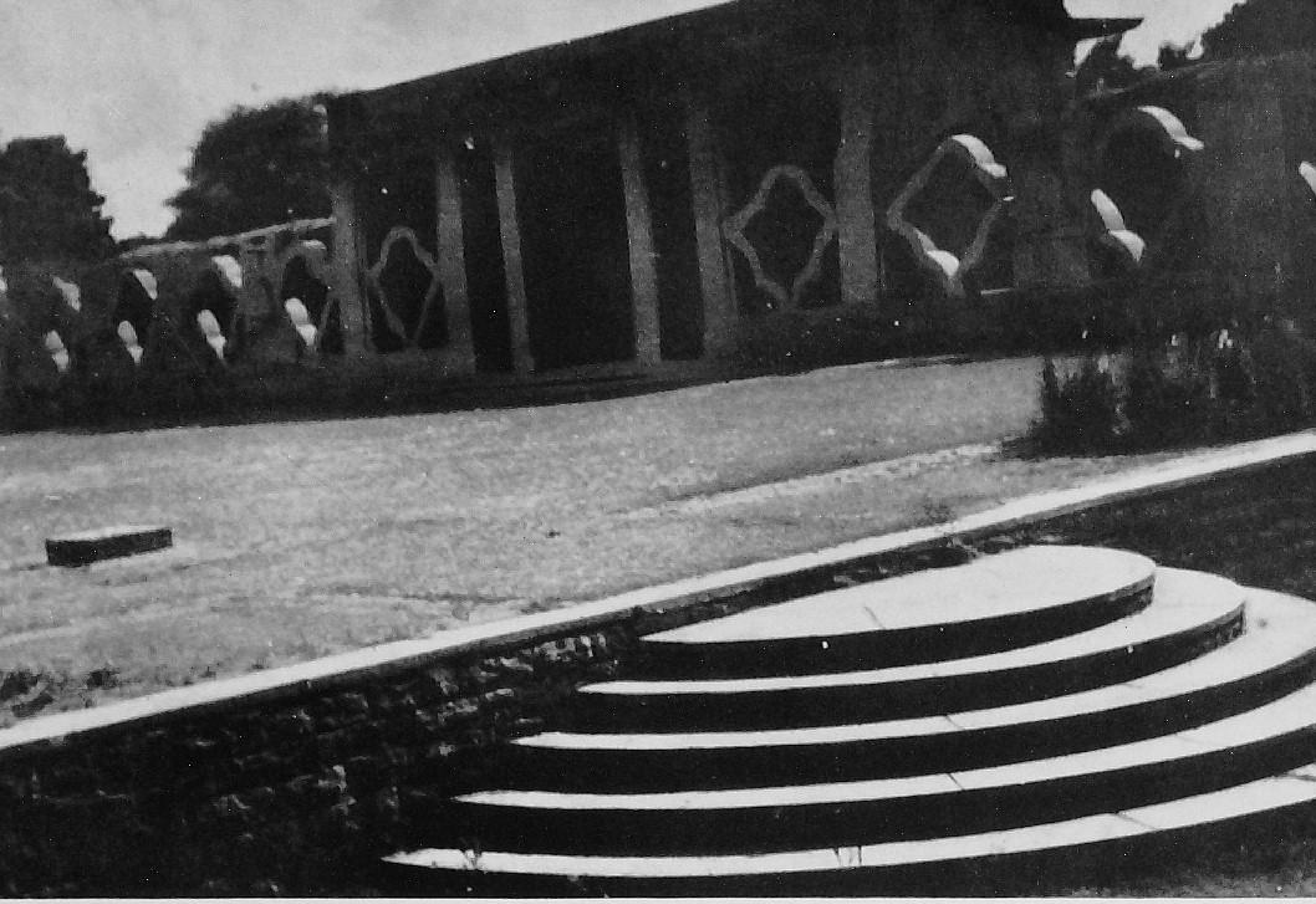
"Two such contiguous panchayats shall form the working party, under a leader elected from among themselves.



Courtesy : Abha Gandhi

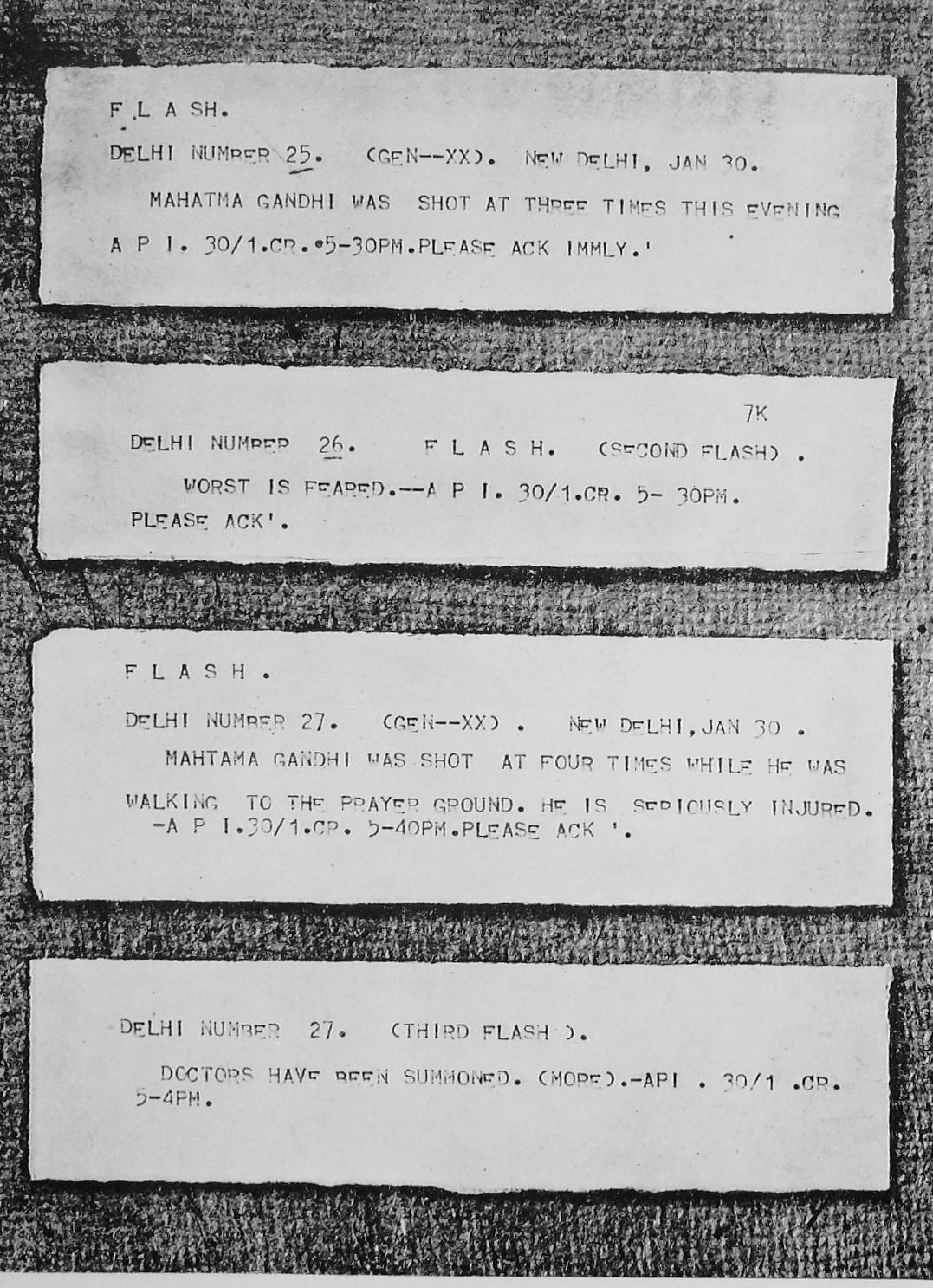
Pages from Gandhi's daily exercise book in Bengali writing—a practice he followed to the last day dating from his tour in Noakhali. On January 30, 1948 he wrote: "Bhairab's home is in Naihati. Shaila is his eldest daughter. Today Shaila gets married to Kailash."

The spot where Gandhi fell after being shot at while walking to the



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

prayer ground in the garden of Birla House, Delhi, January 30, 1948


F L A SH.

DELHI NUMBER 25. (GEN--XX). NEW DELHI, JAN 30.

MAHATMA GANDHI WAS SHOT AT THREE TIMES THIS EVENING

A P I. 30/1.CR. 5-30PM.PLEASE ACK IMMLY.'

7K

DELHI NUMBER 26. F L A S H. (SECOND FLASH) .

WORST IS FEARED.--A P I. 30/1.CR. 5- 30PM.

PLEASE ACK'.

F L A S H .

DELHI NUMBER 27. (GEN--XX) . NEW DELHI,JAN 30 .

MAHTAMA GANDHI WAS SHOT AT FOUR TIMES WHILE HE WAS WALKING TO THE PRAYER GROUND. HE IS SERIOUSLY INJURED.
-A P I.30/1.CR. 5-40PM.PLEASE ACK '.

DELHI NUMBER 27. (THIRD FLASH).

DOCTORS HAVE BEEN SUMMONED. (MORE).-API . 30/1 .CR. 5-4PM.

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

News flashes from Delhi on January 30, 1948

"When there are a hundred such panchayats, the fifty first grade leaders shall elect, from among themselves, one second grade leader and so on, the first grade leaders, in the meanwhile, working under the second grade leader. Parallel groups of two hundred panchayats shall continue to be formed, till they cover the whole of India, each succeeding group of panchayats electing a second grade leader, after the manner of the first. All the second grade leaders shall serve jointly for the whole of India, and severally for their respective areas. The second grade leaders may elect, whenever they deem necessary, from among themselves a chief who will, during pleasure, regulate and command all the groups.

"(All the final formation of provinces or districts is still in a state of flux, no attempt has been made to divide this group of servants into provincial or district councils, and jurisdiction over the whole of India has been vested in the group or groups that may have been formed, at any given time. It should be noted that this body of servants derive their authority or power from service ungrudgingly and wisely done to their master, the whole of India.)

"1. Every worker shall be a habitual wearer of khadi, made from self-spun yarn or certified by the A.-I.S.A., and he must be a teetotaller. If a Hindu, he must have abjured untouchability, in any shape or form, in his own person or in his family, and must be a believer in the ideal of inter-communal unity, equal respect and regard for all religions and equality of opportunity and status for all, irrespective of race, creed or sex.

"2. He shall come in personal contact with every villager within his jurisdiction.

"3. He shall enrol and train workers from amongst the villagers and keep a register of all these.

"4. He shall keep a record of his work from day to day.

"5. He shall organize the villages, so as to make them self-contained and self-supporting through their agriculture and handicrafts.

"6. He shall educate villagers in sanitation and hygiene, and take all measures for prevention of ill health and disease among them.

"7. He shall organize the education of the village folk from birth to death along the lines of the Nayee Talim, in accordance with the policy laid down by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

"8. He shall see that those whose names are missing on the statutory voters' roll, are duly entered therein.

"9. He shall encourage those who have not yet acquired the legal qualification, to acquire it for getting the right of franchise.

"10. For the above purposes and others to be added from time to time, he shall train and fit himself in accordance with the rules laid down by the sangh for the due performance of duty.

"The sangh shall affiliate the following autonomous bodies: All-India Spinners' Association, All-India Village Industries Association, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Harijan Sevak Sangh and Goseva Sangh.

"The sangh shall raise finances for the fulfilment of its mission from among the villagers and others, special stress being laid on collection of poor man's pice."

On January 27, Gandhi was taken right into the sanctum sanctorum of the *dargah* at Mehrauli. He was deeply moved at the sight of the wanton damage done to the marble screens, enclosing the inner shrines. Gandhi who had hardly imagined that he would be required to deliver an address on that occasion, was very deeply touched by the spectacle before him. He had come there on pilgrimage, not to make speeches, he remarked. Ever since he had heard that it might not be possible to hold the *urs* at Mehrauli as in previous years, he had been deeply distressed over it. It, therefore, gave him supreme satisfaction that the citizens of Delhi had risen to the occasion and had given a lie to those fears. If the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi thoroughly cleansed their hearts and made up their minds never again to allow the fratricidal strife to raise its head, India and Pakistan, united in a brotherly bond, would together command the respect and regard of the world, instead of becoming the butt of the world's ridicule. One could understand the division of patrimony, as between the blood brothers. But did it mean that, thereafter, they must become enemies? His reply was, "No". If they did, then the world would set them down as fools. He would go even further and call them uncivilized. When he had broken his fast, they had pledged themselves to live together in amity and peace, like blood brothers. They should now renew and confirm that pledge. All religions were, at bottom, one, though they differed in detail and outward form, even like the leaves on a tree. Each leaf has a separate and a distinct existence, but they are all sprung from and are organically related to the trunk. Again, no two leaves are alike. Yet they never quarrel among themselves. Instead, they dance to the same breeze and emit sweet symphony together." I want you to take a vow," he remarked, "that you will never again listen to the voice of

Satan and abandon the way of brotherliness and peace. Personally, I have never known what it is to be communal. To unite all sections and all communities that people this vast land of ours has been my dream, ever since my early childhood, and till that dream is realized my spirit can know no rest."

He warned them against being carried off their feet by the news of the attack on Parachinar Refugee Camp by the trans-border tribals. They must regard it as a test of their faith. It had also shocked him. But they must never allow even such incidents to rekindle in their hearts the sentiment of retaliation or of revenge. They should instead proclaim to themselves and all concerned that they were out not to demand blood for blood—that was the way to suicide—but to confront with love, even the murderer. "It might appear very difficult," he said. "But I do not think so. That is why, when I broke my fast, I remarked, that if only the people of Delhi thoroughly purified their hearts and kept the same pure, Delhi could then solve the problem of India. If, on the other hand, they did things which they did not mean, only to prolong the life of an old man like myself, they would verily encompass my death, while deluding themselves into the belief that they were saving my life."

On January 28th, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur asked, "Were there any noises in your prayer meeting today, Bapu?" Gandhi replied, "No. But does that question mean that you are worrying about me? If I am to die by the bullet of a madman, I must do so smiling. There must be no anger within me. God must be in my heart and on my lips. And you promise me one thing. Should such a thing happen, you are not to shed one tear."

At the prayer meeting on January 29th, Gandhi spoke of a deputation of about forty refugees from Bannu, who had called on him in the afternoon. Poor men they were in an afflicted state. He prized their *darshan*. One of them said that they owed their miseries to him and angrily asked him to leave them alone and retire to the Himalayas. The speaker asked him at whose bidding he should go. Some of them were annoyed, a few went to the length of abusing him, while many eulogized his efforts. The only course, therefore, open to him was to follow the dictates of God, who spoke to men in the inmost chamber of the heart. There were women too in that company. He regarded them as his own sisters. When he said that every woman was his sister or daughter, her grief became his grief. "Why do you feel that I do not

know your adversities and do not feel my share in them?" he asked. "I have not taken to the service of humanity at anyone's bidding, and, cannot give up that service at anyone's bidding. I am what God has willed me to be and, act as He directs. Let Him do what He wills of me. If He so chooses, He can kill me. I believe that I am acting as He commands me. I would very much enjoy living in the Himalayas. I will not be in want of food or drink or clothing there. It will be a peaceful place. But I do not want peace of that sort. I want to reach peace through agony. My Himalayas is here. If you are all going to the Himalayas, you can take me with you."

The whole of the 29th was so full of activity that at the end of the day Gandhi was utterly fagged out. His head was reeling. "And yet I must finish this," he remarked, pointing to the draft constitution for the Congress, which he had undertaken to prepare. He rose at quarter past nine to retire to bed. He was feeling very much disturbed and he recited to his grand-daughter Manu a Hindi couplet, meaning:

"The spring of the garden of the world lasts for a few days;
Have a look at its show for a few days."

On Friday morning, January 30, he woke up as usual at half past three for the prayer. Then he sat down to work and then took a nap. At eight, he got ready for his massage. Passing through Pyarelal's room, he handed him the draft of new constitution for the Congress, which he had partly prepared on the previous night and asked Pyarelal to "thoroughly" revise it. "Fill in any gaps in thought that there might be," he added. "I wrote it under a heavy strain."

Passing out of the room at the end of the massage, he inquired if Pyarelal had finished the revision and further asked him to prepare a note on how to meet the threatened food crisis in Madras in the light of his experience in Noakhali. "The Food Ministry is feeling nervous. But I maintain that a province like Madras, that is blessed by nature with coconut and palm, groundnut and banana in such plenty, not to mention roots and tubers of various kinds, need not starve, if only the people know how to husband their resources in food."

Gandhi then proceeded to take his bath. When he emerged from it, he appeared much refreshed and the strain of the previous night had disappeared. At half past nine, he took his morning meal, after going through his daily exercise in Bengali writing—a practice which he had invariably followed, ever since he embarked on the tour in Noakhali. He was still at his meal, consisting of goat's milk and cooked and raw

vegetables, oranges and decoction of ginger and sour lemons, when Pyarelal took to him the draft constitution of the Congress. He went through the additions and the alterations point by point and removed an error in calculation that had crept in with regard to the number of the panchayat leaders.

After his midday nap, he saw some visitors. There were the Muslim priests from Delhi, who gave their consent to his going to Wardha. He told them that he would be absent for a short while only, unless God willed it otherwise and something unforeseen happened.

He told to Bishan: "Bring me my important letters. I must reply to them today, for tomorrow I may never be."

A Sindhi deputation called on him. Their sufferings moved him. He referred to the advice offered to him by one refugee to retire to the Himalayas. Chuckling with laughter, he observed that nothing would be better in one sense—he would develop into a double Mahatma and attract larger crowds. But what he wanted was not vainglory or ease, but such comfort and strength, as he could extract out of the prevailing darkness and misery.

At 4 p.m., Sardar Patel went to see Gandhi and was with him for an hour. Despite the relaxation that followed his fast, Gandhi knew of the friction between the Sardar and Nehru, and it worried him. He wanted them to hold together. Nehru and Azad were to see him after the evening prayers. At five, he took out his watch and told the Sardar that it was time for his prayers. Gandhi left his room at 5.10 p.m. to wend his way to the prayer meeting on the adjoining lawn. His grand-daughters, Manu and Abha, were by his side. He leaned on them, as he walked. As he passed through the cordoned path through the prayer congregation, he took his hands off the shoulders of the two girls to answer the *namaskars* of the people. All of a sudden, someone from the crowd, a Hindu named Nathuram Vinayak Godse, roughly elbowed his way into the cordon from the left. Manu, thinking that he was coming forward to touch Gandhi's feet, remonstrated and tried to stop the intruder by holding his hand. He violently jerked Manu off, causing the spittoon and the *mala*, which she was carrying, to fall. As Manu bent down to pick up the scattered articles, he planted himself in front of Gandhi at point-blank range and fired three shots in quick succession from a seven-chambered pistol. All the bullets hit Gandhi on and below the chest on the right side. Two bullets passed right through; the third bullet remained embedded in the lung. At the first

shot, the foot that was in motion faltered. The hands which had been raised in *namaskar* slowly came down. He still stood on his legs; then the second shot rang out and he collapsed. He uttered "Hè Rama". The face turned ashen grey. A crimson spot appeared on the white clothes. The body was carried inside and laid on the mattress, where he used to sit and work. Death was instantaneous.

Jawaharlal Nehru rushed to the spot. Overwhelmed with grief, he bent his head down and began to sob like a child.

Sorrow descended everywhere. Flags were lowered all over the world.

Over the radio, Jawaharlal said:

"The light has gone out of our lives... Yet I am wrong, for the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light... and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it... For that light represented the living truth."

Photograph : Henri Cartier-Bresson

Jawaharlal Nehru climbs the fence of Birla House and breaks the news of Gandhi's death to the sorrow-stricken people, Delhi, January 30, 1948

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Father of the Nation

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

At rest

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

One whom millions worshipped

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Bullet marks on the chest

Indian newspapers

announce the death

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

India mourns

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

The world's homage

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Bapu

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

The funeral procession starts

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Last glimpse

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Last journey

Photograph : D. G. Tendulkar

Without Bapu

Medallion by A. Landry

" The only tyrant I recognize in this world is the still small voice within"

The following letters from Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru are published for the first time with the kind permission of Nehru.

APPENDIX

Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati
January 4, 1928

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I feel that you love me too well to resent what I am about to write. In any case, I love you too well to restrain my pen when I feel I must write.

You are going too fast. You should have taken time to think and become acclimatized. Most of the resolutions you framed and got carried could have been delayed for one year. Your plunging into the "republican army" was a hasty step. But I do not mind these acts of yours so much, as I mind your encouraging mischief-makers and hooligans. I do not know whether you still believe in an unadulterated non-violence. But even if you have altered your views, you could not think that unlicensed and unbridled violence is going to deliver the country. If after careful observation of the country in the light of your European experiences convinces you of the error of the current ways and means, by all means enforce your own views, but do please form a disciplined party. You know the Cawnpore experiences. In every struggle, bands of men who would submit to discipline are needed. You seem to be overlooking this factor in being careless about your instruments.

If I can advise you, now that you are the working secretary of the Indian National Congress, it is your duty to devote your whole energy to the central resolution, that is, unity, and the important but the secondary resolution, that is, boycott of the Simon Commission. The unity resolution requires the use of all your great gifts of organization and persuasion.

I have no time to elaborate my points but *verbum sapienti*.

I hope Kamala is keeping as well as in Europe.

Yours,
BAPU

The Ashram, Sabarmati
January 17, 1928

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I must dictate and save time and give rest to my aching shoulder. I wrote to you on Sunday about Fenner Brockway. I hope you got that letter in due time.

Do you know that it was because you were the chief partner in the transactions referred to that I wrote the articles you have criticized, except, of course, about the so-called "All-India Exhibition"? I felt a kind of safety that, in view of the relations between you and me, my writings would be taken in the spirit in which they were written. However, I see that they were a misfire all round. I do not mind it. For, it is evident that the articles alone could deliver you from the self-suppression, under which you have been labouring apparently for so many years. Though I was beginning to detect some differences in viewpoint between you and me, I had no notion whatsoever of the terrible extent of those differences. Whilst you were heroically suppressing yourself for the sake of the nation and in the belief that by working with and under me in spite of yourself, you would serve the nation and come out scatheless, you were chafing under the burden of this unnatural self-suppression. And, while you were in that state, you overlooked the very things which appear to you now as my serious blemishes. I could show you from the pages of *Young India* equally strong articles written by me, when I was actively guiding the Congress with reference to the doings of the All-India Congress Committee. I have spoken similarly at the All-India Congress Committee meetings, whenever there has been irresponsible and hasty talk or action. But whilst you were under stupefaction these things did not jar on you, as they do now. And it seems to me, therefore, useless to show you the discrepancies in your letter. What I am now concerned with is future action.

If any freedom is required from me, I give you all the freedom you may need from the humble but unquestioning allegiance that you have given to me for all these years and which I value all the more for the knowledge I have now gained of your state. I see quite clearly that you must carry on open warfare against me and my views. For, if I am wrong, I am evidently doing irreparable harm to the country and it is your duty after having known it to rise in revolt against me. Or, if you have any doubt as to the correctness of your conclusions,

I shall gladly discuss them with you personally. The differences between you and me appear to me to be so vast and so radical that there seems to be no meeting ground between us. I cannot conceal from you my grief that I should lose a comrade so valiant, so faithful, so able and so honest, as you have always been; but in serving a cause, comradeships have got to be sacrificed. The cause must be held superior to all such considerations. But this dissolution of comradeship—if dissolution must come—in no way affects our personal intimacy. We have long become members of the same family, and we remain such, in spite of grave political differences. I have the good fortune to enjoy such relations with several people. To take Sastri for instance, he and I differ in the political outlook as poles asunder, but the bond between him and me, that sprung up before we knew the political differences, has persisted and survived the fiery ordeals it had to go through.

I suggest a dignified way of unfurling your banner. Write to me a letter for publication showing your differences. I will print it in *Young India* and write a brief reply. Your first letter I destroyed after reading and replying to it, the second I am keeping, and if you do not want to take the trouble of writing another letter, I am prepared to publish the letter that is before me. I am not aware of any offensive passage in it. But if I find any, you may depend upon my removing every such passage. I consider that letter to be a frank and honest document.

With love,
Yours sincerely,
BAPU

Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati
April 1, 1928

MY DEAR JAWAHAR,

I have your letter.

The enclosed copies will tell you what progress is now being made in the negotiations with the millowners. I, however, agree with you that nothing will come out of them at the present moment. But the negotiations may fructify in due occasion. There was a time, when the millowners were absolutely opposed about boycott and the khadi

propaganda. I shall write to you again after these negotiations are finished.

Though Romain Rolland's first expected letter has arrived and he warmly looks forward to my proposed visit, it does not enable me to come to a decision. As the time for arriving at a fixed decision is drawing nearer, my diffidence is growing. There may be, however, a cable from Rolland next week and it may decide my fate. Meanwhile, there is no going to Singapore. I am fixed up here for the time being. If I do not go to Europe, I am due to go to Burma and pass there two months, going to a hill-side and making collections during my stay there.

I am quite of your opinion that some day we shall have to start an intensive movement without the rich people and without the vocal educated class. But that time is not yet.

You do not tell me where Kamala is to pass the summer months.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

The Ashram, Sabarmati
April 4, 1928

MY DEAR JAWAHAR,

I have your letter. I do not remember father having told me that he would be back in Bombay to confer with the millowners during the last week of this month. But he and I discussed the question of foreign cloth boycott at length and we had a conference with Sheth Lalji, Shantikumar, and Sheths Ambalal, Kasturbhai and Mangaldas. It was a good conference, but nothing definite was done. I have now definitely heard that the millowners are going to start their own Swadeshi League, which means, of course, that we are not coming to any terms.

I had a long discussion with Lalaji today, for he was here for two days. He is enthusiastic about the boycott of foreign cloth. I have supplied him with literature. He even suggested that I should invite a few leaders and confer with them about boycott. I told him that I had not the courage to do so. He is of opinion that if intense boycott propaganda is to be taken up, I must not go out of the country, wherein, of course, I agree; but I cannot take up intense propaganda,

unless politically-minded India is whole-heartedly with me and unless the agitation about "the temporary boycott of the British goods, principally of British cloth," is given up. We have, therefore, come to this provisional arrangement that if anything concrete takes place by spontaneous action on the part of the known leaders, I should give up the idea of going to Europe. On the other hand, if nothing of that kind happens and if otherwise I see my way clear, I should proceed and that Lalaji and others who are minded like him should cultivate an atmosphere for intense propaganda about foreign cloth boycott with or without the assistance of mills. I, therefore, suggest that you should confer with Dr. Ansari and others—I suppose they will all go to the Punjab—and pass the resolution about foreign cloth boycott through khadi. I would warn you against any mention of indigenous mill cloth. You can simply say: "Whereas the only effective means of immediately demonstrating the united strength of the nation lies through boycott of foreign cloth, this conference urges all concerned completely to boycott foreign cloth and adopt handspun and handwoven khadi, even though such adoption may necessitate revision of one's taste about dress and some pecuniary sacrifice."

You will also let me know the result of private discussions you may have with friends and advise me as to whether I should give up the idea of going to Europe. Dr. Ansari should really be able to decide.

Yours sincerely,

BAPU

On the train
29-7-1929

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Your letters to Indu are excellent and should be published. I wish you could have written them in Hindi. Even as it is, there should be a simultaneous publication in Hindi.

Your treatment of the subject is quite orthodox. The origin of man is now a debatable subject. The origin of religion is a still more debatable matter. But these differences do not detract from the nature of your letters. They have a value derived not from the truth of your conclusions but from the manner of treatment and from the fact that

you have tried to reach Indu's heart and open the eyes of her understanding in the midst of your external activities.

I did not want to strive with Kamala over the watch I have taken away. I could not resist the love behind the gift. But the watch will still be kept as a trust for Indu. In the midst of so many little ruffians about me, I could not keep such a piece of furniture. I would, therefore, be glad to know that Kamala will reconcile herself to Indu getting back her darling watch. My article on the Congress crown is already written. It will be out in the next issue of *Young India*.

Yours,
BAPU

August 7, 1929

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I do not like the title "Dawn of History." Father's letters to his daughter may be a better title than letters to Indira, though I do not mind the latter.

I wish Kamala would be freed from these recurring pains. I should risk the operation, if the doctors would perform it.

I am keeping the clock under lock and key and shall bring it on my coming there.

I go to Bombay on August 11th to meet Jinnah. I admire Sarojini Devi's optimism. But I am going to Bombay with much hope.

Yours,
BAPU

Aligarh
November 4, 1929

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have just got your letter. How shall I console you? Hearing others describe your state, I said to myself, "Have I been guilty of putting undue pressure on you?" I have always believed you to be above undue pressure. I have always honoured your resistance. It has always been honourable. Acting under that belief, I pressed my suit. Let this incident be a lesson. Resist me always, when my suggestion does not

appeal to your head or heart. I shall not love you the less for that resistance.

But why are you dejected? I hope there is no fear of public opinion in you. If you have done nothing wrong, why dejection? The ideal of independence is not in conflict with greater freedom. As an executive officer now and president for the coming year, you could not keep yourself away from a collective act of the majority of your colleagues. In my opinion, your signature was logical, wise and otherwise correct. I hope, therefore, that you will get over your dejection and resume your unfailing cheerfulness.

The statement you may certainly make. But there is no hurry about it at all.

Here are copies of the two cables just received. Please show these to father also.

If you feel like talking things over with me, don't hesitate to catch me, wherever you like.

I hope to see Kamala hale and hearty when I reach Allahabad.

If you can, do wire that the blues are over.

Yours,
BAPU

Ras
19-3-1930

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

You are in for a whole night vigil but it is inevitable, if you are to return before tomorrow night. The messenger will bring you where I may be. You are reaching me at the most trying stage in the march. You will have to cross a channel at about two a.m. on the shoulders of tried fishermen. I dare not interrupt the march, even for the chief servant of the nation.

Love,
BAPU

Yeravda Central Prison, Poona
May 2, 1933

My dear Jawaharlal,

As I was struggling against the coming fast, you were before me as it were in flesh and blood. But it was no use. How I wish I could feel that you had understood the absolute necessity of it. The Harijan movement is too big for mere intellectual effort. There is nothing so bad in all the world. And yet, I cannot leave religion and, therefore, Hinduism. My life would be a burden to me, if Hinduism failed me. I love Christianity, Islam and many other faiths through Hinduism. Take it away and nothing remains for me. But then, I cannot tolerate it with untouchability—the high and low belief. Fortunately, Hinduism contains a sovereign remedy for the evil. I have applied the remedy. I want you to feel, if you can, that it is well if I survive the fast and well also if the body dissolves, in spite of the effort to live. What is it after all—more perishable than a brittle chimney piece. You can preserve the latter intact for ten thousand years, but you may fail to keep the body intact even for a minute. And surely, death is not an end to all effort. Rightly faced, it may be but the beginning of a nobler effort. But I won't convince you by argument, if you did not see the truth intuitively. I know that even if I do not carry your approval with me, I shall retain your precious love during all those days of ordeal. . .

Love from us all,
Bapu

Yeravda Central Prison, Poona
February 15, 1933

My dear Jawaharlal,

In the hope of giving you a good letter against your splendid letter, I have been postponing writing to you. But I can do so no longer. Daily the work is increasing. I must, therefore, write now and do the best I can. I wonder if you are allowed an innocent paper like the *Harijan*. I am sending it in the hope that you will get it. If you do, you will please let me have your opinion. The fight against sanatanists is becoming more and more interesting, if also increasingly difficult. The one good thing is that they have now been awakened from long

lethargy. The abuses they are hurling at me are wonderfully refreshing. I am all that is bad and corrupt on this earth. But the storm will subside, for I apply the sovereign remedy of ahimsa, non-retaliation. The more I ignore the abuses, the fiercer they are becoming. But it is the death dance of the moth, round a lamp. Poor Rajagopalachari and Devadas! They are also in for it. They are dragging out the engagement with Laxmi and are weaving round it foul charges. Thus is untouchability being supported!!

. . . Our time is being wholly occupied by the untouchability work. Sardar Vallabhbhai contributes all the envelopes for the ever increasing number of outgoing letters. He is the diligent newspaper reader who digs out odd bits of information on untouchability and what not. He is also a factory for the inexhaustible supply of mirth. The inspection day is just the same to him as any other day. He never has any request to make. With me never a day passes but I have some request to make. But I do not know which is the happier. Why may I not be as happy as he, if I can take my defeats without putting a long face!

We all envy your solitude and your studies. It is true that our burdens are of our own making or more accurately of my own making. I have dashed to pieces all Vallabhbhai's hope of becoming a good Sanskrit scholar. He can't concentrate on his studies in the midst of the excitement of Harijan work and the daily dish of spiced criticism which he enjoys like the Bengal footballers their game. Mahadev continues to be what Shaukat Ali described him to be—the *hamal* of the party. No work is too much for him or beyond him. Chhaganlal Joshi is still finding his feet. But he is flourishing with the spring now well on us, he cannot fail to blossom out. We are not a bad assortment. We observe the rules of the game and so make a fairly decent family, strictly regulated by the code of Varnashrama, which between Dr. Ambedkar and me will soon provide a new sensation for the sanatanists. More trouble for me, but none of my seeking I assure you. I have now only space and time enough to say that we all hope your progress all round continues steadily.

Love from us all,
BAPU

Delhi
March 9, 1936

My dear Jawaharlal,

So you return leaving Kamala for ever in Europe. And yet her spirit was never out of India and will always be your precious treasure, as it will be of many of us. I shall never forget the final talk that melted our four eyes.

Heavy responsibility awaits you here. It is laid on you, because you are well able to bear it. I dare not come to you as I would have, if my body had regained its original elasticity. There is nothing organically wrong with me. The body has even gained in weight. But it has lost now the vitality it seemed to have only three months ago. Strange to say, I never felt any illness. And yet the body had become weak and the instrument registered high blood pressure. I have to be careful!

I am in Delhi to rest for a few days. If your original plan had been carried out, I would have remained in Wardha for our meeting. It would have been quieter there for you. But if it is the same thing to you, we may meet in Delhi, where I should be till the 23rd instant at least. But if you prefer Wardha, I can return there earlier. If you come to Delhi, you could stay with me in the Harijan quarters newly built in Kingsway—quite a good place. You will tell me, when you can, the date of our meeting. Rajendra Babu and Jamnalalji are or will be with you. Vallabhbhai also would have been, but we all thought it would be better if he stayed away. The other two have gone there not for political discussion, but for condolence. The political discussion will take place, when we have all met and when you have finished the domestic work.

I hope Indu bore well the grief of Kamala's death and the almost immediate separation from you. What is her address?

May everything be well with you.

Love,
Bapu

Segaon
July 15, 1936

Dear Jawaharlal,

1. I hope you got my wire about the Government of India letter. I procured it yesterday and read it through. Nobody has ever written to me about the subject matter. My reading of the letter confirms my view that you should take legal notice of the libel.

2. If you will not misunderstand me, I would like you to keep me free of the Civil Liberties Union. I do not like for the time being to join any political institution. And there is no meaning in a confirmed civil resister joining it. Apart however from my joining or not joining the Union, mature consideration confirms me in my opinion that it would be a mistake to approve Sarojini or for that matter any civil resister as president. I am still of opinion that the president should be a well known constitutional lawyer. If that does not commend itself to you, then you should have an author of note who is not a law-breaker. I would also ask you to restrict the number of members. You need quality, not quantity.

3. Your letter is touching. You feel to be the most injured party. The fact is that your colleagues have lacked your courage and your frankness. The result has been disastrous. I have always pleaded with them to speak out to you freely and fearlessly. But having lacked the courage, whenever they have spoken, they have done it clumsily and you have felt irritated. I tell you they have dreaded you, because of your irritability and impatience of them. They have chafed under your rebukes and magisterial manner and above all your arrogation of what to them has appeared to them your infallibility and superior knowledge. They feel that you have treated them with scant courtesy and have never defended them from the socialists' ridicule and even misrepresentation.

You complain of their having called your activity harmful. That was not to say that you were harmful. Their letter was no occasion for recounting your virtues or your services. They were fully conscious of your dynamism and your hold over the masses and youth of the country. They know that you cannot be dispensed with. And so they wanted to give way.

I look upon the whole affair as a tragicomedy. I would, therefore, like you to look at the whole thing in a lighter vein. I do not mind your taking the A.-I.C.C. into your confidence. But I do want you not

to impose on it the unbearable task of adjusting your family quarrels or choosing between them and you. Whatever you do, you must face them with accomplished things.

Why do you resent their majority being reflected in all the sub-committees etc.? Is it not the most natural thing? You are in office by their unanimous choice, but you are not in power yet. To put you in office was an attempt to find you in power quicker than you would otherwise have been. Any way, that was at the back of my mind when I suggested your name for the crown of thorns. Keep it on, though the head be bruised. Resume your humour at the committee meetings. That is your most usual role, not that of a care-worn and irritable man, ready to burst on the slightest occasion.

How I wish you could telegraph to me that on finishing my letter you felt as merry as you were on that new year's day in Lahore when you were reported to have danced round the tricolour flag.

You must give your throat a chance.

I am revising my statement. I have decided not to publish it, till you have seen it.

I have decided that nobody should see our correspondence besides Mahadev.

Love,
BAPU

Segaon
August 28, 1936

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Our conversation of yesterday has set me thinking. Why is it that with all the will in the world I cannot understand what is so obvious to you? I am not, so far as I know, suffering from intellectual decay. Should you not then set your heart on at least making me understand what you are after? I may not agree with you. But I should be in a position to say so. Yesterday's talk throws no light on what you are after. And probably what is true of me is also true of some others. I am just now discussing the thing with Rajaji. I should like you to discuss your programme with him, if you can spare the time. I must not write at length, having no time. You know what I mean.

Love,
BAPU

Segaon, Wardha
June 25, 1937

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Just received your statement on the Frontier policy. Khan Saheb and I have read it. I like it very well. I wonder if the Spanish bombing and the British are exactly alike? Has the extent of the British damage been known? What has been the ostensible reason given for the British bombing? Do not smile or be angry that I do not know these things so well as you do. I can learn very little from the little I see of the newspapers. But don't trouble to answer my questions. I shall follow the reactions to your statement. May be, these will throw some light. And in any case, you will fill in the gaps when we meet. I hope the Maulana will come. But even if he cannot, I would like you to hold on to the date. Let us have the three quiet days.

Love,
BAPU

July 3, 1937

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

... Your calling khadi "livery of freedom" will live, as long as we speak the English language in India. It needs a first class poet to translate into Hindi the whole of the thought behind that enchanting phrase. For me, it is not merely poetry but it enunciates a great truth whose full significance we have yet to grasp.

BAPU

July 15, 1937

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Today is the election day. I am watching.

But this I write to tell you that I have begun to write on the function of the Congress ministries and the allied topics. I hesitated but I saw that it was my duty to write, when I felt so keenly. I wish I could send you an advance copy of my article for *Harijan*. Mahadev will see this. If he has a copy, he will send it. When you see it, you will please tell me if I may continue to write so. I do not want to interfere with your handling of the whole situation. For I want the maximum from you for the country. I would be doing distinct harm, if my writing disturbed you...

BAPU

On the train
August 3, 1937

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I am writing this on the train taking us to Delhi. Herewith is my foreword or whatever it may be called. I could not give you anything elaborate.

You have "perhaps" before Pushtu and Punjabi. I suggest your removing the adverb. Khan Saheb, for instance, will never give up Pushtu. I believe it is written in some script, I forget which. And Punjabi? The Sikhs will die for Punjabi written in Gurmukhi. There is no elegance about that script. But I understand that it was specially invented like Sindhi to isolate the Sikhs from the other Hindus. Whether such was the case or not, it seems to me impossible at present to persuade the Sikhs to give up Gurmukhi.

You have suggested a common script to be evolved out of the four Southern languages. It seems to me to be as easy for them to substitute Devanagri, as a mixture of the four. From the practical standpoint, the four do not admit of an invented mixture. I would, therefore, suggest your confining yourself to the general recommendation that, wherever possible, the provincial languages which have a vital connection with Sanskrit, if they are not the offshoots from it, should adopt the revised Devanagri. You may know that this propaganda is going on.

Then, if you think like me, you should not hesitate to express the hope that as Hindus and Muslims are one day bound to be one at heart, they will also, who speak Hindustani, adopt one script, that is, Devanagri, because of its being more scientific and being akin to the great provincial scripts of the languages descended from Sanskrit.

If you adopt my suggestions in part or *in toto*, you will have no difficulty in laying your finger on the spots recognizing the necessary changes. I had intended to do so myself, in order to save your time. But I must not put that strain on my system just now.

I take it that my endorsement of your suggestions does not mean that I must ask the Hindi Sammelan to give up the use of the word Hindi. I am sure, that cannot be your meaning. I have taken it to the farthest limit possible, as far as I can think.

If you cannot accept my suggestions, it would be better for the sake of accuracy to add the following sentence to the "Foreword":

"At any rate, I have no hesitation in heartily endorsing them in a general way."

I hope Indu's operation will go off well.

Love,
BAPU

I have very carefully gone through Jawaharlal Nehru's essay on the Hindi-Urdu question. The question has latterly become an unfortunate controversy. There is no valid reason for the ugly turn it has taken. Be that as it may, Jawaharlal's essay is a valuable contribution to a proper elucidation of the whole subject considered from the national and purely educational point of view. His constructive suggestions, if they are widely accepted by the persons concerned, should put an end to the controversy which has taken a communal turn. The suggestions are exhaustive and eminently reasonable.

M. K. GANDHI

August 3, 1937

Segaon, Wardha
October 10, 1939

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I could see that though your affection and regard for me remain undiminished, differences in outlook between us are becoming most marked. Perhaps, this is the most critical period in our history. I hold very strong views on the most important questions which occupy our attention. I know you too hold strong views on them but different from mine. Your mode of expression is different from mine. I am not sure that I carry the other members with me in the views that I hold very strongly. I cannot move about. I cannot come in direct touch with the masses, not even with the Congress workers. So I feel that I must not lead, if I cannot carry you all with me. There should be no divided counsels among the members of the Working Committee. I feel that you should take full charge and lead the country, leaving me free to voice my own opinion. But if you all thought that I should

observe complete silence, I should, I hope, find no difficulty in complying. If you think it worth while, you should come and discuss the whole thing.

Love,
BAPU

Sevagram, Wardha
October 24, 1940

DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I was glad to have your wire. If my statement has been allowed, you will have seen it before this. If you are ready, you may now ceremonially declare your civil disobedience. I would suggest your choosing a village for your audience. I do not suppose they will allow you to repeat your speech. They were not ready with their plans, so far as Vinoba was concerned. But should they let you free, I suggest your following the plan laid down for Vinoba. But if you feel otherwise, you will follow your own course. Only I would like you to give me your programme. You will fix your own date, so as to leave me time for announcing the date and place. It may be that they will not let you even fulfil your very first programme. I am prepared for every such step on the part of the Government. Whilst I would make use of every legitimate method seeking publicity for our programme, my reliance is on regulated thought producing its own effect. If this is hard for you to believe, I would ask you to suspend judgement and watch results. I know you will yourself be patient and ask our people on your side to do likewise. I know what strain you are bearing in giving me your loyalty. I prize it beyond measure. I hope it will be found to have been well placed. For it is "Do or Die". There is no turning back. Our case is invulnerable. There is no giving in. Only I must be allowed to go my way in demonstrating the power of non-violence when it is unadulterated.

Maulana Saheb 'phoned saying I should choose another man for the second satyagrahi. I told him I could not do so, if you consented to come in.

I would like your reaction to the step I have taken regarding the *Harijan*.

Love,
BAPU

Glossary

Acharya, preceptor; teacher.
Ahimsa, non-violence.
Akhand Hindustan, undivided India.
Allah-O-Akbar, God is great.
Ashram, a hermitage; place for study and discipline of life.
Asura, a demon.
Azad Hind, independent India.
Babu, Mr.
Badshah, emperor.
Bakr Id or Id, a day of Muslim festival.
Bande Mataram, Hail Mother; the refrain of the Indian national anthem known by the same name.
Basti, slum area.
Behn, sister.
Bhai, brother.
Bhajan, a hymn.
Bhangi, a scavenger.
Bharat Milap, Rama's reunion with his brother Bharat.
Brahmachari, one observing continence.
Brahmacharya, continence.
Chaprasi, a peon; office messenger.
Chhatak, one-eighth of a pound.
Charkha, a spinning wheel.
Chirag, an oil lamp.
Dal, pulse cooked in liquid form.
Dargah, mausoleum or tomb of a Muslim saint.
Darshan, sight of a venerated person or deity.
Deshbandhu, friend of the country.
Dewan, prime minister of an Indian state.
Dharma, duty; religion.
Diwali, Hindu festival of lamps.

Doha, couplet; a kind of Hindu metre.
Dukkhi, unhappy; sufferer.
Duragraha, insistence on wrongdoing or untruth; as opposed to satyagraha.
Duragrahi, one practising duragraha.
Dusserah, Hindu festival before Diwali.
Fakir, a Muslim ascetic.
Firman, edict; an ordinance.
Ghar, house.
Goonda, hooligan.
Goondaism, hooliganism.
Gopi, milkmaid.
Gram, village.
Gram Udyog, village industry.
Granth Saheb, the sacred book of the Sikhs.
Gur, molasses.
Guru, gurudev, a preceptor; a spiritual guide.
Gurudwara, a Sikh temple.
Hans ke liya Pakistan, larke lenge Hindustan, we have won Pakistan while laughing, and we will win Hindustan by fighting.
Harijan, a man of God; untouchable.
Hè Rama, Oh Rama.
Hindostan Hamara, Our India; refrain of a national song.
Id, a day of Muslim festival.
Id Mubarak, Id good wishes.
Jai, victory.
Jai Hind, victory to India.
Jawahar, jewel.
Ji, an affix added to names denoting respect, *e.g.*, Gandhiji.
Jirga, council of the elders.
Kabab, grilled meat preparation.
Khadi, hand-woven cloth from hand-spun yarn.
Khalifa, Muslim civil and religious ruler.
Khalsa, pure; a name for the Sikhs.
Khan, nobleman.
Khudai Khidmatgar, servant of God; Red Shirt volunteer.
Kirpan, a sword or a dagger carried by the Sikhs.
Kisan, peasant.
Lathi, stick.

Lok Sevak Sangh, organization for the service of people.
Maha yajna, great sacrifice.
Maharaja, king; ruler.
Maharani, queen.
Mahatma, a great soul.
Mal, thick string connecting and regulating the two discs of a spinning wheel.
Mala, beads.
Mandir, a Hindu temple.
Mantra, a sacred formula or incantation.
Manzil, residence.
Masjid, mosque.
Maulana, a Muslim divine.
Mehtar, scavenger.
Mehtarani, woman scavenger.
Mohalla, area.
Namaskar, salute.
Pak, pure.
Panchayat, a village council of five elected members; a council of village elders.
Pandit or pundit, a learned Hindu teacher; a prefix to certain Brahmin family names, *e.g.*, Pandit Nehru.
Phoongyi, Buddhist monk from Burma.
Pinjrapole, a shelter for crippled and aged cows.
Praja Mandal, states' peoples association.
Purdah, veil; custom of keeping women in seclusion or under a veil.
Qaid-e-Azam, great leader.
Raj, rule.
Raja, king.
Ramdhun, recitation of the name of god Rama.
Ram Raj, kingdom of Rama; beneficent rule.
Rashtrabhasha, national language.
Rashtrapati, Congress President.
Rishi, seer.
Ryot, an Indian peasant.
Sabha, conference; organization.
Samagra Gram Seva, all-round service to a village.
Sammelan, conference.
Sanatana, ancient; orthodox.

Sanatani, sanatanist; orthodox Hindu.
Sangh, organization.
Sanyasi, one who has renounced the worldly life; a recluse.
Sardar, nobleman; an honorific term, *e.g.*, Sardar Patel.
Sat Shri Akal, God is Truth.
Satyagraha, "a force which is born of truth or non-violence"; tenacious clinging to truth; civil or non-violent resistance.
Satyagrahi, one practising satyagraha.
Shahanshah-e-Pakistan, emperor of Pakistan.
Shakti, power.
Shanti Sena, peace brigade.
Sharanarthi, refugee.
Shariat, Muslim law.
Sher-e-Kashmir, lion of Kashmir.
Shri, Shriman, Mr.
Shrimati, Miss or Mrs.
Swadeshi, belonging to, or made in, one's own country.
Swaraj, self-government; self-rule.
Tad gur, gur made from palm-juice.
Tapascharya, penance; austerity.
Tejas, moral brilliance.
Thug, cheat.
Urs, anniversary celebration of a Muslim saint.
Yavana, barbarian; a foreigner.
Zamindar, landlord.

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